

# BOOK I

THE STORY  
CONTINUES

Part One:

Adventures  
and Misadventures

## CHAPTER 1. INVASION

(Alice's voice)

For over 20 years Shura has had a Drug Enforcement Administration analytical license which allows him to possess, identify, and analyze drugs in each of the five Schedules. He has to expect occasional (every few years) inspections of his laboratory by agents who are experts in detecting signs of illegal activity and/or non-adherence to regulations. Over the 15 years I've known him, he has been inspected twice — on each occasion by different DEA agents, two at a time — and the inspections had resulted in no complaints, no suggestions for changes to be made, and no difficulty in renewing his license annually.

Shura made one mistake. When he was originally granted the license, there was a handbook of regulations, and over the years he continued to do his work without inquiring as to whether new regulations might have been written. He assumed that, since his license had to be renewed every year, the DEA would notify him if there were any recent developments that he ought to be aware of. In retrospect, this was naive. As we learned later, the DEA expects the head of any licensed lab to ask them, to actively inquire, as to whether new rules might have been put into effect.

But, again, you'd think that the previous inspecting agents would certainly have been aware of new rules and regulations, and would have alerted Shura to their existence, as well as insisting that he conform to them. They never did.

There was another reason for Shura's lack of curiosity about possible new regulations applying to his license. For thirty years, one of his best and dearest friends was the administrator for the DEA western laboratories, Paul Freye. Paul liked to come out on an occasional Sunday and fool around in Shura's lab. He was fascinated by the chemistry of the psychedelics; he was also, as he put it, "Chickenshit about ever putting one of those things into myself; I just don't have that kind of courage." We never suggested that

he might do so, because all of us knew that Paul's position in the DEA made it impossible for him to nibble anything that even came close to being a psychedelic drug, however legal.

During the years of friendship with Shura, Paul was in our house countless times, as well as in the lab. He saw the anonymous drug samples sent through the mail for analysis, most of which Shura had never touched, since he didn't want to do such work for people he didn't know. The little sample envelopes were piled up, gathering dust, here and there in two rooms, one of them Shura's office, the other a former bedroom, now a semi-lab containing his IR (infra-red) and NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance) machines, and shelves of records, both the business and music kind.

Among the samples sent to him for analysis, to give one example, might be a small amount of a drug found at a rave party by a researcher doing a government-funded study on rave dances. Such a researcher might have been told that the sample was XTC or some other scheduled drug, and knew he could send it to Shura for analysis, to find out exactly what the material was. By doing his research this way, he could accumulate his data and write his paper without running into such problems as having to report to the DEA on the names of young people at the raves who had given him samples (which would — needless to say — stop his research dead in its tracks, not to speak of the damage it would do to the young rave dancers involved). Shura would probably consider the analysis of such a sample to be worth doing just for the information to be obtained about what was happening on the rave scene.

Shura had always believed that his analytical license allowed him to do analysis, and that included analysis of anonymous samples and research samples. Our DEA friend Paul may have believed it did, too. But once, as he passed by the dusty little mound of samples in the former-bedroom-semi-lab, Paul remarked to Shura, "You know, these babies could be more trouble than they're worth: it wouldn't hurt to just toss 'em all out." Shura barely heard the words, his mind being focused on an exciting development in the lab which he wanted to show his friend, and Paul's gentle warning was forgotten.

Shura is a great research scientist, not a great housekeeper. A few small vials of questionable material — waiting for analysis or to be put away — might be found hiding behind stacked reprints on the top of his office filing cabinets, or tucked into a shoe box in the room with the infra-red, nicknamed Basement Four. There were no young children in our house, and the study and Basement Four were closed and off-limits during any party which might include children. The only people besides ourselves who might be in our home were friends and trusted acquaintances, none of whom would go to Shura's lab without his knowledge, or pick up dusty

little envelopes with question-marks on them in his study, or touch a vial bearing chemical symbols in any room. Our friends are not sneaks, nor are they idiots.

When, long before I knew him, Shura received a box containing three peyote cacti from a priest of the Native American Church (a sort of shaman-to-shaman gift), Paul expressed his delight. He knew that Shura's analytical license allowed him to have the Divine Cactus in his possession. He also knew that Shura had a dream of someday taking apart the peyote, in order to finally pin down the numerous unknown trace alkaloids present in the plant, which have not—to this day—been analyzed. Shura put it this way in a letter to a friend:

"The bulk of the minor alkaloids have indeed been analyzed quite thoroughly. Actually my hope was to see if a synthetic mescaline analogue that I had made, a methoxymethylenedioxyphenethylamine and a most logical bio-synthetic precursor to peyote components such as anhalonine, lophophorine and peyophorine, was itself a natural component of this cactus. In fact I have, rather presumptively, named it lophophine, assuming that it would be a trace component. With the reference sample in hand, and a valid extract of the cactus, the 'discovery' of it as being there would be a piece of cake."

In the meantime, the beautiful, soft green cacti stood in their red clay pots against a wall of the patio, getting water and occasional loving words over the years.

Paul invited Shura several times to talk about psychedelic drugs to the chemists in the San Francisco DEA lab. On Shura's study wall was a photograph of himself shaking hands with Paul, while holding a plaque awarded to "Dr. Alexander Borodin, in Recognition of Your Significant Personal Efforts to Help Eliminate Drug Abuse," dated 1973; the bronze medallion was engraved at the top, "Department of Justice," and at the bottom, "Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs," the forerunner of the present DEA. In the photograph, both Paul and Shura had full beards, wore dark suits and ties and looked appropriately stern.

Next to this plaque was a second award, given almost a decade later, this time from the Drug Enforcement Administration, "With Appreciation for the Valuable Contribution of Dr. Alexander Borodin, in Support of The Western Laboratory," signed by Paul, just before he retired. Shura admitted to me that he wasn't quite sure why he'd been awarded these plaques, but I think they were acknowledgments of his scientific integrity and his insistence on making available information about psychedelic drugs, their chemistry and their effects to anyone who wanted to know, including the government.

Paul officiated, as a minister of the Universal Life Church, at our

wedding on the lawn behind our house. A year later, when he married a little blonde DEA intelligence agent, a sweet, tough and compulsively honest lady named Elena, the ceremony was performed on that same lawn. The Farm, as we call it, swarmed with DEA chemists and agents, and Shura took them all on a guided tour of our old farmhouse and the fabled lab, with its delicate, long-legged spiders and dried leaves blown in through the door by many gusts of wind over many winters. Among other sights shown to the visitors, a few yards from the lab, was the sump; this was a hole, dug deep by Shura, decades earlier, and lined with bricks, now filled almost to the top with earth. Into it, Shura poured the occasional pot residues, as he called them, and waste solvents — things that couldn't be safely thrown into a fire in the lab fireplace.

About two years after Paul retired, our book, *PIHKAL*, was published. The first half of the book told the stories of Shura and myself, our early lives and our difficult love affair, each one of us writing separately, in our individual voices, to create the totality of the adventure. Much of the story, which dealt with psychedelic experiences, was fiction, but it was based on the explorations that we each had made during the 60's, and the research we had done before the passage of the Analogue Drug Bill in 1986, which effectively brought all such exploration to a stop in this country.

That part of the book was controversial enough, because it also spoke out about the damage being done to our basic freedoms by the so-called War on Drugs, and it argued vehemently for the individual adult citizen's right to explore his own mind and soul in any way he chooses, provided that he takes care not to intrude on the rights of any other human being.

It was the second half of the book that caused shock waves in certain places. It was written for such time in the future when rationality would (we sincerely hope) replace the ugly police state mentality rapidly growing in this country. This second half consisted of 179 recipes, procedures for making psychedelic drugs. It was written in the style of the respected *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*, and would be understood largely by professional chemists. There were also pages of commentary from anonymous contributors detailing the effects of each of these drugs at various dosage levels.

As soon as we had the completed, published book in hand, Shura proceeded to distribute free copies to all the chemists he knew in the DEA labs across the country, explaining that it should be a valuable reference work for them. It was immediately put to use as exactly that, and it is probable that many of those chemists never got around to reading the first half of the book, finding all the excitement they could possibly hope for in the second, the technical half.

Right after *PIHKAL* came out, we would lie in bed at night, imagining out loud to each other the various possible scenarios involving angry government officials, but as time went on, we relaxed and told ourselves that, after all, we live in a country that gives protection to free speech, and Shura had maintained an excellent relationship, over the years, with the people he knew in the DEA.

We had been aware for a long time that there were a few powerful men in the Washington, D.C. headquarters of the DEA whose feelings toward Shura were deeply hostile. There was one in particular who had the reputation of being a truly malignant person, determined to rise through the ranks of the agency. He was vehement in his hostility towards all uses of visionary plants or drugs, even by Native Americans; we could only hope that he would either ignore our book or dismiss it, after considering the fact that it had proven useful to many of the DEA chemists. This, too, might be seen in retrospect as naivete on our part.

The general state of things in our house and in the lab was the same when Paul had been around (and when the two earlier inspections had taken place) as they were years later, in 1994, when our world was turned upside down.

Two years after *PIHKAL*'s publication, on a Tuesday in late September of 1994, a red car drove up our road and into the parking area above our old farmhouse. Three men got out and introduced themselves as agents of the DEA. We expressed, gently, our surprise that they had not phoned before coming, because during Paul's administration, he had insisted that agents who came to inspect the Borodin lab phone Shura in advance, to make an appointment.

The head agent, Mr. Fosca, a neatly dressed man of medium height, was polite and smiling; he ignored our reproachful comments as he shook our hands. The other two were dressed quite casually in sports clothes, which was most unusual for DEA people on duty. I offered coffee and tea, but the three men declined. I remembered then that DEA agents don't usually accept food or drink in a place they are inspecting, at least not until their work is finished and they have found nothing out of order.

The agents had brought a warrant with them. This was startling; no previous inspection had ever involved a warrant, and both Shura and I were taken aback and rather bewildered. Why did they need such a thing?

My daughter, Wendy, was working in Shura's office, doing the Transform Press business — processing orders for *PIHKAL* — as she did every week. She glanced up as Shura brought Mr. Fosca through the door, and smiled as he introduced her as the manager of the press. Then she went on with her work.

Shura and I were surprised by the unexpected visit, but not wor-

ried. After all, two previous inspections had turned up nothing considered a problem, and we assumed that this one would have the same outcome.

We were, at that moment, packing for a trip to Spain, where Shura was due to present several talks at a conference not far from Barcelona. Our plan was to leave the following day, and this official visit would mean taking several hours out of our scheduled preparations. Aside from that one concern, we had no reason to be apprehensive.

The agents went to the lab with Shura. It was just a few minutes later, around 2:00 p.m., when Wendy knocked on my bedroom door, where I was busy folding and squeezing things into suitcases, and told me that Michael Sun had arrived. I clapped my forehead, having forgotten completely that we'd made an appointment to meet with him for about an hour, that afternoon, just to catch up on recent events. Michael was (and is) one of my favorite people in the world, a gentle, soft-spoken, quietly brilliant young man who was engaged in pulling together a coalition of religious and spiritual practitioners and teachers throughout the country who believe that psychedelic plants and drugs have an immense potential as tools for exploring the human soul and spirit. He believes (as do we) that the best way to encourage changes in bad drug law is to work with people in the government, to explain and persuade, and to open their understanding of the ancient religious and spiritual traditions in most cultures which have used such materials.

I met Michael at the sliding glass doors between the dining room and the small outside patio. He handed me a tall glass bud vase which carried one single glowing red rose. I thanked him and gave him a hug, then said in a low voice, "We have some unexpected visitors, inspectors from the DEA; they came without phoning first — we didn't expect them at all — and I imagine you probably don't want to stick around to be introduced."

He grinned and agreed that he didn't think it would benefit anybody for him to remain. He said, "I'll phone you tomorrow and we can set up another time — " but I interrupted to remind him that tomorrow we would be on our way to Spain.

"Call us in three weeks, honey," I urged him, and after another hug and his wishes for a good and happy trip, he left. I put the rose in its shining vase on the tiled counter under one of the kitchen windows, where it would catch the sunlight.

I returned to the bedroom and continued packing until, about an hour later, I heard voices in the hallway. Shura was telling the agents that, yes, there were two other rooms in the house where some samples of drugs might be found, "There's stuff in my office and in the room we call Basement Four, which isn't a basement at all, by the way, but it's where I keep my IR — my infra-red equipment — and other instruments that might be corroded



in the real lab."

I thought to myself, he sounds pretty cheerful; guess the inspection went all right.

During the next thirty minutes or so, my casual attitude underwent a change, as I heard Mr. Fosca say over and over again, "That is a violation of the regulations," always in a pleasant voice, sometimes with what I heard as a faint overtone of regret, especially when adding, as I heard him do once, "These violations can be worth a fine of up to twenty-five thousand dollars each, you know."

"Which regulations?" asked Shura, insistently, before retreating into a resigned silence.

There was supposed to be a safe in the lab, Agent Fosca continued, into which all scheduled drugs were placed under lock; there should be a system by which the local police station could be alerted by an alarm if unauthorized persons tried to gain access to the contents of that safe. He added, "After all, you don't want to be responsible for a tragedy, if some visiting child happens to discover one of those vials, do you?"

*That certainly sounds reasonable. But why didn't the earlier inspectors say anything about safes? They must have written an awful lot of new rules in the past few years. And nobody told Shura.*

I ventured out into the hallway, closing the bedroom door behind me, and watched from the doorway of Basement Four as Agent Fosca, moving from one cluttered surface to another, told Shura that, not only were the anonymous drug samples stacked up somewhere other than in the lab — where they belonged — but Shura's license did not authorize him to analyze anonymous drug samples anyway. "That kind of activity requires a separate license, which you don't have," he said, his voice fractionally more disapproving than before.

Shura replied, "Nobody ever told me that; after all, my license allows me to do analysis, doesn't it?" After a small silence, he shrugged, "But if I have to give up doing an occasional analysis, that'll be fine with me, because I don't like dealing with the damned things; I don't get paid for doing it, and most of the time, I don't learn anything interesting enough to justify the time and energy it takes."

During the next hour, Mr. Fosca sat at our dining room table, examining all of Shura's records, including receipts for chemical purchases going back several years. He asked for and got photo copies of purchase orders. All these were reasonable requests, and Shura complied without hesitation. But he was aware — more than I was, at that point — that the questioning had already gone well beyond that involved in any previous inspection.

By now, Shura's attitude had become one of innocent surprise

(which was certainly genuine), combined with an apparently good-natured desire to cooperate, all of which he hoped would hide his growing anxiety. He went very slightly manic, asking several times, "Where can I get a copy of the new book of regulations?" and, "Why hasn't anyone told me about these new regulations?" There might have been a hint of disbelief to be detected underneath these questions, but all he got from Mr. Fosca was a promise that a copy would be mailed to our address, as soon as the agents got back to the office.

During the fourth hour of questioning about what this or that chemical was intended for, and why this or that scheduled drug was present in such quantity, and Shura's apparently cheerful explanations, I went and sat outside the dining room, where all this was going on, making myself comfortable in one of our molded plastic patio chairs, underneath the big canvas umbrella, with my eternal glass of iced tea. I got into conversation with the oldest of the three agents, about children and high schools — he was planning to attend a parents' night at his son's school, that evening — and now, when I offered him some plain iced water, he told me he would appreciate that, yes; it was pretty hot and he could use a drink. I was pleased that he was accepting my offer; I felt it was a generally good sign, although of what I couldn't be sure.

At the end of the fourth hour, Agent Fosca closed his notepad, stood up and said that he was going to need at least three — maybe four — more days to complete his inspection, and he was very sorry we were leaving for Spain, but he would be in touch as soon as we had returned, to set up the next session. Shura said "Yes, of course," and accompanied the three men out to the car to say good-bye.

As soon as the agents had left, he came back into the dining room and we stood and looked at each other, smiles gone, then we sat down at the table, in silence, to let it all sink in. Wendy came out of the office, saying, "Okay, I've finished," then sat down with us. I leaned back in my chair and said, "Jeezus!"

"Bummer, huh?" Wendy looked from me to Shura and nodded to herself.

Shura muttered, "I wonder if there really are so many new regulations!"

I said, "Oh, there probably are, honey. Remember, Mister Fosca pointed out that the DEA can't be expected to notify every head of every lab in the country whenever there's a new regulation passed, so the lab heads have to keep track themselves. It just didn't occur to us that the rules might have been changed."

"So if there were new regs, how come the last two inspections came up with no complaints, not a single one!" Shura asked.

"Yeah," I said, "That doesn't make sense."

After a moment's silence, Shura said, "There was one reference to *PIHKAL*. I mean, he must have read it — or maybe he was talking about things we've said in interviews — because he asked me, when we were looking at stuff in Basement Four, 'Does your research group still meet these days?' and I said that we didn't meet any more for research, just socially, because you have to remember, the average age of the people is around seventy, and that kind of exploration is a young person's game. Besides, the Analogue Drug Bill pretty much put an end to all research in that area."

"What did he say?" Wendy asked.

"Nothing; just went on to other things."

"So after you get back from Spain," said Wendy, "They're doing some more inspecting?"

"He said three, maybe four more days," answered Shura, shoving his hair back with both hands, "What more can he do here that'd take three or four more days, for Pete's sake!"

"Twenty-five thousand dollars per violation," I said to Wendy, but Shura made a correction, "Up to, he said; up to twenty-five thousand dollars."

"Oh, okay. Depending on how benign they decide to be," I said.

"And you can just guess how benign the DEA is going to feel toward the author of *PIHKAL*, can't you?" Shura bared his teeth in a grimace.

For the first time that day, all three of us actually broke into laughter.

During the next two weeks we attended a conference on Consciousness Change in the ancient little town of Lerida, in the part of Spain known as Catalonia, and when the conference was over, we spent a few days in Barcelona, one of the loveliest cities in the world. During that time, Shura wrote his own notes on what had happened and how he felt about it.

He entitled it:

## VISITORS FROM ANOTHER PLANET

(Shura's voice)

Act I:

Within a week I have had two most extraordinary encounters. Both seemed at first fundamentally benign and unthreatening, but both developed in ways that could not have been predicted, and which I am still trying to understand. In fact, both involved such complexities, I have lost most of

the minute-to-minute detail, and will try here to give the music, accompanied by what little I can remember. In a figurative sense, both were visits from another planet.

The first of these occurred earlier this week, on Tuesday at the Farm, the day before we were booked for *a* flight to Spain, where I was to give an address to an international Change of States of Consciousness conference. Alice and I were in the final stages of preparation, she with the last odds and ends of packing and I with the making of the arrangements to have our mail picked up by the neighbors, and getting an itinerary made out for my son Theo and Wendy. Wendy, Alice's younger daughter, was doing the weekly books for Transform Press. We were expecting a drop-in visitor at about 2:00 PM, so we had opened the big wooden gate at the bottom of the driveway, but it was just a bit after noon when I heard a car drive up, above the house.

I went out to meet it, and watched three men, one relatively young and dressed in suit and tie, the other two older and more casually dressed, get out of the car. They came down the stairs from the parking area, shook my hand, and introduced themselves. I didn't recognize any of their names, but I did know the organization they worked for. It was the Drug Enforcement Administration, the DEA. I invited them into the house (they accepted), offered them coffee or tea, or something else to drink (they declined) and asked how I might help them. They mentioned that they were on an official visit (was it the office for compliance? the office for diversion?) and wanted to look at everything that might bear on my handling of scheduled drugs.

They handed me a few pages of something with a business card attached (I thought it might be *a* listing of what they were looking for) but I found out later on reading it that it was a search warrant allowing them pretty much free reign to look for, and to take, whatever they felt might be of interest to them. Alice came in from the packing tasks about then, and I introduced her. Once she realized that I was not making a joke as to the identity of our visitors, she played the role of the gracious hostess, and introduced them to Wendy who had come into the kitchen for a coffee refill.

The principal investigator was a young man of perhaps 35, carrying a clipboard with a yellow lined pad for taking notes, and a camera to photograph everything of interest. He was the asker of most questions, and he introduced himself as Agent Fosca. The other two were just sort of there, perhaps to be of help if help was called for, or to be witnesses of things said and done.

Our first major rallying point was over in the lab.

The exchange pretty much went according to the following routine: Mr. Fosca asks, "Where in this area (wherever we happened to be at the

moment, with vials and petri dishes and small bottles and dirty beakers in front of us) are materials that are scheduled drugs?"

I reply, "Well, this is a sample from England, from a rave scene; it might be Ecstasy. Is it? I haven't analyzed it yet, so I don't know."

Fosca: "Who sent it to you?"

"I don't remember."

"Where is the record of it having been received?"

"I don't have any."

"Why don't you keep notes?"

"Why should I?"

"It is required by regulations."

"I never heard of any such regulation."

"There is a fine of up to \$25,000 for every infraction of regulations."

"Which regulations?"

There were many variations on this theme, but each of them reflected the same basic content.

The two subordinate agents seemed to become more and more at ease as the day progressed, asking occasional questions apparently out of curiosity, rather than from any official need, and clearly disliking the smells of the lab. So they stayed outside, talking to each other, while Fosca and I continued as a twosome inside for an hour or so.

He inspected the licenses on the wall. There was one from the DEA for Schedule I-V drugs, for analytical purposes. There was one from the State Department of Radiology that allowed me some comfort in purchasing radioisotopes for my research work, and there was a Clinical Chemist toxicology registration.

Fosca picked up a Hamilton 100 microliter fixed needle syringe and asked what it was for. I told him, "For injecting small, known volume samples into the GC for chromatographic separations."

He picked up a packet of #18 1-inch hypodermic needles in sterile sleeves, and asked what they were for.

"For venting the positive argon gas pressure out through rubber grommets in sealed systems that have to stay dry," I said.

"They appear to be the size usually used for human injections."

"That's because I get them from the San Francisco General Hospital, where they are used with patients."

Everything that might be seen as having a drug orientation of course had a legitimate lab use as well, and he seemed to accept this; at least, he didn't argue with my explanations. Still, he continuously took notes and photographs. Scribble, scribble, click, click.

But the repeated emphasis was on scheduled drugs. Do you have scheduled drugs here?

"Well, yes."

"Here is a bottle that contains a few grams of 2C-B. How much does it weigh?"

"I don't know — a couple of grams."

"Could you weigh it?" Sure. Onto a sheet of paper on the top-loader scales. It was 3.4 grams.

"Why so much?"

"I use it as a chemical precursor for the synthetic exploration of new compounds carrying the 2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine orientation, but with unusual substituents in the four position."

Scribble, click.

"Other scheduled drugs?"

"Well, here is a petri dish with some methcathinone in it."

"Why do you have that?"

"I made it," I said.

"Why did you make it?"

"To see if, from an analysis of trace impurities, I could tell which method was used. What are the methods that could be used? The major two are the oxidation of ephedrine with either permanganate or dichromate."

"Which did you use?"

"Let me look it up in my notes," I said, and looked it up. "It was dichromate."

"You keep notes on your research work?"

"Yes, in great detail."

"Why?"

"Because I work towards publication in the scientific literature or towards patents, and in either case things must be written up."

"But you don't take notes when you receive samples of what might be scheduled drugs, from different sources?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Why should I?"

My mind wandered a bit as I remembered a somewhat parallel visit that had occurred at Solano Laboratories, many years ago, when I worked there, an inspection visit from a representative of the DEA forerunner which was called the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. There was a gentleman named Special Agent Somebody, who sat in a small office with the head of the lab and me, and most aggressively cross-examined the two of us as to the security of our storage methods for poisons and drugs. As he talked, he carefully adjusted himself so that the gun that was tucked in behind the belt over his tummy was clearly visible.

I glanced at my DEA guest and saw no tell-tale bulge. There was a

beeper evident; that was all. Maybe a concealed tape recorder? I wished I had one tucked away in my own pocket. But I didn't, and would have to depend on my faulted memory. I suspect he had no tape, but rather depended on scribble and click.

Another petri dish came to his attention, on the bench in the lab, possibly because of the first three letters of the name written on it: MDMone. "What is this?" he asked, tapping it a little. I explained that the story behind this was the search for an antidepressant akin to my Dimoxamine invention of some years ago, but cautioned him that this sort of information had to be kept confidential as I had not yet filed for a patent, and all this was privileged information. We weighed it as well (why, I am not sure) and everything was duly written down. Eventually I went outside to talk to the other two, and my questioner stayed in the lab for a few more minutes alone. Maybe he was taking pictures, maybe taking samples, maybe just tallying what he saw. In any case, I had little choice in the matter.

Up to the Quonset hut at the top of the stairs behind the lab, which I call my magic stock room. "Are there any scheduled drugs here?" asks Mr. Fosca, looking around at the shelves of glassware and chemical supplies. I remembered a large bottle of chloral hydrate and managed to find it amongst a large collection of dusty bottles on a shelf over at the far wall.

"Where did this come from?" asked Agent Fosca. I shrugged, "I don't remember — perhaps I was cleaning out some stock room somewhere and it was there as a chemical. It has the big C with the superimposed IV on the label, so it's probably kosher."

"Any record?" Fosca wanted to know. I said no. I decided to add an explanation.

"You see, there were a lot of research groups that were being harassed by environmental this and safety standards that, who simply chose not to fight the bureaucracy. They found it less stressful to abandon their store-rooms of occasionally used chemicals, and offered them to me for my eventual needs."

Outside, the other two agents were grooving on the view, and we joined them.

"How long have you lived here?" asks Fosca.

"Off and on, since my parents bought it in 1936 or 1937."

"Did you build the house yourself?"

"Not really — I helped my parents do it, but I was away in the Navy during World War II." To myself, I thought: maybe that will help him see this as a house-not-built-with-drug-money, as well as giving him a bit of good ole United States patriotism. But then, I must remember that I am dealing with a soldier and do not know his commanding officer, and this soldier is here for cause, and I do not know the cause, although I do have

some suspicions. It occurred to me that, since he had said, at some point, "I don't make the final decisions, Doctor; I'm just a soldier," I should ask the identity of that un-named commanding officer, if only to be able to relish his attempts at evading the question. Sadly, I never got up the courage to say the words, and of course he did not volunteer any name.

Back we went to the house, to rallying point number two, which was the dining room. Here, Agent Fosca sat down at the oval table, put his clipboard flat in front of him, and asked to see my records for purchases of drugs — which is standard practice for any lab inspection — and asked a few questions about my storage of reference samples. Rather than take him to them, I brought them to him, which seemed to be okay.

I brought out my two vial boxes, with their indices. "May I have copies?" asks Fosca. Sure. Wendy made copies. Also out came my chemical purchase records. Copies of all of this? No problem.

Next we went into my office. Wendy was there at her desk and smiling, bless her.

"What do you call this room?"

"My office."

I hoped silently that Fosca would see and read the plaques on the wall, given to me several years apart by the DEA for services rendered or something of that sort. They were acknowledgments of my having given freely of my knowledge of psychedelic drugs over the years, having answered many questions from agents and chemists, and having given talks to the staff of the San Francisco DEA lab.

Fosca saw the plaques and read them in silence, before resuming the questioning.

"Are there any scheduled drugs in here?"

"I don't really know," I answered, truthfully. There were many things piled on top of my filing cabinets — journals, letters, card files, anonymous samples — all bearing an accumulation of dust, and I hadn't sorted any of it out for at least six months.

"Maybe here in this bowl?" Fosca was poking around. We came up with several things, all of them interesting. A set of small MDMA vials, with my writing on them, saying something like 10 mgs. MDMA.

"Is this your writing?"

"Looks like it," I say.

"And this vial (pointing to a vial of fluid, almost full, of something called LAD) what is this?"

"I don't recall."

"Is it LSD?"

"I doubt it, or I would have called it LSD."

There was a small pile of Marinol capsules (Marinol is the govern-



ment approved form of THC, the active component of marijuana, given to selected patients suffering from certain medical problems) and I explained that I had probably been asked to do an analysis for someone who thought that his capsules did not contain the right ingredients.

"Who?"

"I can't remember."

"And, this vial with something called N-hydroxy-MDMA from someone called Charles; who is Charles?"

"I can't remember."

All of these samples (taken, and completely receipted) were placed on the top of my Xerox machine, and I was asked to write my thoughts and recollections about each one, and I did my best, suffering as I did from a very poor memory. Everything was photographed.

(In case anyone fails to understand why I would not choose to identify the senders of anonymous samples, I'll just say that these samples were sent to me on the assumption — which I shared — that I had the legal right to analyze them, without having to identify the sources to any authorities. This kind of work had been done, in the past, by at least one good laboratory which considered it a public service, but they had been forced to shut it down on order of the DEA, who insisted that this kind of quality control was an aid to illegal activity. In summary, my identification of a sender of an anonymous sample — if I knew who it was or might be — would be considered by me as a complete betrayal of a trust, and an unforgivable act of cowardice. I suspect that Agent Fosca understood this, although he continued to press me for the information.)

Somewhere about this time, I asked Fosca, "If the name of a sender of an anonymous sample had been kept, as a matter of record, and if the sample proved to be a scheduled drug, and if the DEA ever chose to collect this information, might not it be used as evidence in a criminal charge against the sender?"

His answer was, "I really couldn't say."

Into Basement Four.

"What do you call this room?"

"Basement Four." I didn't tell him that the room had been my son's bedroom and that, since there were three basement rooms below the house, it had seemed logical to rename the room Basement Four when I turned it into a semi-lab and library. I had the feeling that Agent Fosca might not have quite enough whimsical humor in him to appreciate the story.

"Are there any scheduled drugs in here?"

"I have no idea."

"What is this?" He had picked up a vial labeled with black pen, "Rosa."

"Obviously a sample from someone called Rosa."

"Who is she?"

"I don't know."

"What does it contain?"

"I haven't looked at it yet."

"Are all these other samples from people, and are they scheduled drugs?"

"I don't know. I haven't analyzed them yet."

I am exhausted. They know, because I had told them when they first arrived, that my wife and I have a 5:30 date for the Berkeley Repertory Theater and that we are expected in town soon. They seem to be prepared to accommodate me. Agent Number Two writes out a longish receipt for samples taken, and then Agent Fosca tells me that he will need three or four more days to complete his inspection. He says he'll phone to make arrangements after I return from Spain. The three men leave. It has been quite a day.

Off to the conference in Spain, and let's see what's what when we return.

## Act II:

The second visitation was from an equally strange place, equally beyond my control, and it occurred on Friday the 30th, in Spain, just three days later. This was an interaction with my own unconscious. I had a most vivid dream involving a large house that was constructed on four levels which, Alice assured me, took no expertise to determine that it represented a laboratory, clearly my laboratory and the several stages of visiting that I had shared with the drug authorities. It was with fine humor that Alice shared her interpretations of the three remembered aspects of this bit of symbolism.

The earliest part of the dream that I recall was of a broom sweeping up leaves. The broom was something like the bundle of twigs tied to a handle that I had seen used in France by the street sweepers who collect debris in the gutters and push it all towards the sewer drain at the end of the block.

I had a real life memory of a flower stand on a sidewalk curb, in Paris, after a day's business, with the seller cleaning up for the night. All the leaves and blossoms and wrappings were cleared off the walkway into the gutter, then pushed with the help of some water source down into the drain hole under the sidewalk. All the unsold bunches of flowers were then shoved and jammed into that same drain hole, and I had the problem of imagining the status of the Parisian sewer system that evening, with the

added burden of thousands of bouquets of roses from the many flower stands throughout the city, all being pushed into sewer drains at the same time. But then, simply trying to imagine the Parisian sewer system, even without these flowers, is completely beyond me.

In my dream, I was sweeping up leaves with a Parisian street-sweeper's broom, and the leaves were all sticky and tended to clump together. It was a Sisyphian task in that all I got for my efforts were the same leaves in a somewhat different arrangement. No piles, no constructive rearrangements, simply pointless redistribution. I cannot locate the scene in relationship to the four story house; maybe it was on the roof or maybe it was in front of it. I'm pretty sure it was an outdoors location as there was some air movement, which neither helped nor hurt my futile efforts.

Another remembered detail was a milk canister, the kind that one sees alongside the mail boxes on the rural roads in farming country, where the day's production is put out to be picked up by the tanker truck from the creamery. This canister was on its side, but I did not make any connection between the stickiness of the leaves and the possible presence of milk. They were sort of separate events, unconnected at the time. I ignored the canister and stayed with the task of rearranging the leaves. I told Alice that I felt it took no remarkable insight to construct some interpretation involving spilt milk. She laughed and said she had to agree.

Efforts to tidy up were being made as the house was apparently on the market, to be sold. The basement was a very poorly constructed place, due to the fact that it had been dug out after the rest of the house was completed. There were sections of brick walls that were not quite level, and the floor was concrete and sloped in some obscure direction, and there had once been a plan of having something heavy down there, but it had been an afterthought. At the time of the dream, I had wondered about a cyclotron, but it has just occurred to me that this heavy thing concept might represent the permanent magnet of an NMR, which is what I have in Basement Four, toward the back of the room.

And the sloppiness, the not quite levelness in the dream, was detectable in much of the rest of the construction of the house. Nothing quite fit. Doors didn't close well, drawers stuck, rain leaked in on occasion, and somewhere there was a desk or counter top that was clearly not level. But on it was something, maybe a balance, or computer, that was indeed level. I tried to bring into accord the non-levelness and the levelness, and it never quite came together. I can hear the interpretation now from my dear spouse, involving stuck drawers, not-quite closed doors, cyclotrons or NMR magnets in the basement, spectrophotometers that have functions that may be seen by visitors as being not quite on the level, spilt milk and all that.

I wonder if, with a little practice, I might be able some day to

interpret my own dreams, without having to call on Alice for help. Are they all this obvious? That dream, at least, was pretty blatant.

I am writing this in Spain, during the almost three weeks that immediately followed the surprise visit. This is a marvelous time for reflection but it has the added twist that if there is a paranoid fantasy or pessimistic scenario available, my mind will act it out. There are obviously more acts of this play, but they cannot yet be written as the script is not under my control.

Just what is the problem? Who has been offended that is of sufficient clout to justify this kind of inspection? What is the "for cause" that convinced the judge to issue the search warrant that permitted this kind of fishing expedition to take place?

To bed, and sweeter dreams which I will not have cause to remember.

(Alice's voice)

A couple of days after our return from Spain, Agent Fosca phoned, as he had promised, to make an appointment for a continuation of the inspection. Shura agreed to keep Thursday open, even though he usually goes to the Owl Club on Thursdays around 3:30 p.m. to play his viola in the orchestra. He told me it was worth losing one evening of rehearsal to get this DEA thing over and done with, and I agreed.

I have to admit that, up to this point, my attitude toward the intense inspection of three weeks before was one of uneasy guilt, mixed with real bewilderment. Guilt, because I had been forced to see our neglected little vials and sample envelopes through the eyes of what I still believed was a very, maybe over-conscientious, dedicated agent, who was not enchanted by our magical, artistic mess, and saw only a lack of good housekeeping and basic inattention to the need for reasonable precautions.

The bewilderment was still there because of the unanswered question: why had the previous inspection teams found nothing amiss under exactly the same circumstances? I had certainly a strong suspicion, as did Shura, that official anger about our book *PIHKAL*, back in Washington, had fueled the intensity of the inspection, but I felt that it must still have been our fault; Shura's failure to stay abreast of the regulation changes, and my failure to insist on taking everything to do with drugs out of the house and into the lab. Of course, Shura and I considered the office and Basement Four as extensions of the lab, but I could understand that official outsiders might well see it differently.

Our friend, Paul, had phoned several times from his new home in Oregon, and told us he couldn't imagine what Agent Fosca was talking

about, with all this violations of regulations stuff, which cheered us both somewhat, but only momentarily. Perhaps Agent Fosca was new on the job, and a stickler for rules, and we would just have to deal with it as best we could.

So, on Thursday morning, when Shura returned from the mailbox with the Chronicle tucked under his arm, he left the big farm gate unlocked. We managed to finish reading the paper with our morning coffee before 9:00 a.m., when we expected Agent Fosca and his two sidekicks to return.

At three minutes after nine, we heard the sound of engines and went outside to stand together in the little patio, smiles ready.

The first thing to appear up on the paved parking area was a small, square grey truck with the word, "Decontamination," stenciled on its side. It pulled up to the left of the garage. Behind it came Agent Fosca's red car; behind that, a huge yellow fire truck, which parked right above us, facing the house. Then, as we watched in mouth-open astonishment, a brown sedan found a spade to the right of the grey truck. People were getting out of the first cars as yet another one, blue this time, drove up and parked. The rest of them we couldn't see from the patio, but the total for the day — I discovered later from Shura — was eight vehicles.

We stood there, Shura and I, while people of both sexes, in all sizes, wearing dark pants and jackets, bustled here and there, some of them calling out to each other, sounding cheerful. I could see white letters stenciled on the backs of the jackets. Some said, "DEA," others said, "Sheriff's Department," and one said, "State Narcotics." People were walking down the brick steps dressed in silvery moon suits with helmets. A portable shower was sticking out of the top of the decontamination truck, and the whole thing — funny little square vehicle with a dinky little shower head on a pole — looked as if it had materialized out of a cartoon by Gary Larsen.

Jaws dropped, mouths gaping, we stood there, watching this flood of cars and people as if it were a movie. Then Agent Fosca and a short, round-faced man in his forties came down the small stairway to the patio. The strange man held up a piece of paper about three feet from Shura's face and intoned, "Doctor Borodin, I have here a warrant to search these premises," and Agent Fosca, somewhat more diffidently, held out his own piece of paper and explained, "This is a renewal of the warrant we showed you last time."

For a small, endless moment, my one concern was that either Shura or I might have a heart attack, or a stroke. I'm sure we were white with shock. Our house, our sacred space, our beloved home, was about to be clawed at, taken apart, dismantled. The image that most horrified me was of strangers carrying out our files of correspondence, letters written over the years by people who felt they could tell us things they couldn't share with

anyone else; people who might have signed names and addresses to long, moving accounts of life-changing LSD trips, or sessions with depressed, anxious friends, using that greatest of all therapy drugs, MDMA; people who could now be watched, followed, challenged and harassed, all because they had trusted us, not only to read and appreciate their stories — and perhaps answer their questions — but to make sure that their letters didn't fall into the wrong hands.

Shura, as he told me later, thought they were also going to take his computers and his reference files.

The stocky man was saying something. I caught the word, "Sump," and tried to focus on what was happening in front of me.

"This warrant entitles us to inspect the grounds around your laboratory and the location known as the sump for hazardous wastes," I heard, and suddenly relief poured/through me like cool water. The man, probably aware of our state of shock — or at least seeing the blank incomprehension in our faces — was repeating what he'd just said, something about being from the County Environmental Protection Agency or some such, and the warrant was to enable him to —

"Sump," I said, turning to Shura; "Sump," he breathed back to me.

He managed a slight smile as he turned to the older official, "Sure, I understand. You have to do your job."

"Thank you," said that gentleman, heartily, "If we can have your cooperation, it'll all go faster, and we can get out of here that much sooner."

"Yes, yes," said I, suddenly able to move again, "Would you like some tea or coffee or mineral water?" I paused on my way back into the house.

"No, thank you, Ma'am, we've brought our own stuff. We'll be just fine."

Another middle-aged officer, his blue jacket declaring, in white letters, SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, asked me, "Is there anybody else besides you and the Doctor — here in the house, Ma'am?"

I said no, there was nobody else here.

*Big uncle type, comfy paunch, business-like, but seems sort of benign.*

I walked, arms folded, into the kitchen, wondered for a moment why I was there, and decided it was to pour myself another cup of coffee. Shura walked in behind me and muttered something about where did he put his coffee mug, then found it on the dining room table, and held it out to me for a refill.

We looked at each other, just for an instant, just long enough to see what we were feeling reflected in the other's eyes. We both knew what we had to do: be friendly, as casual as possible, hang slightly loose; innocent people with nothing to hide who were understandably upset by this

invasion, but eager to cooperate. Et cetera, et cetera. The anger could wait until we were alone.

Shura went back outside, and I heard a loud voice from the hallway, "There's a locked door here; what do I do?"

I peered into the shadows of the hall and saw the officer who had asked me about other people in the house. He was twisting the knob of our bedroom door, and I called out to him, "It isn't locked. It just sticks a bit."

He turned his large, friendly face to me and said, "Thank you," and pushed the door open.

*Oh, shit! I haven't made the bed yet and everything's a shambles.*

Our bedroom was always off limits to anyone else. It was our private place, and it was always messy, due to my habit of piling clean clothes which I was too lazy to hang up on top of boxes of unsorted photographs, on top of backpacks I hadn't unpacked from the last trip, and so on and so on. Shura never complained, which always amazed me and made me deeply grateful, although no less guilty. He knew I'd eventually sort the whole mountain of stuff out, and the room would be neat and tidy, the tiled floors mopped, nothing out of place, for about 48 hours, before the accumulation began again.

I stood behind the officer, squinting past him at the familiar mess, and said some apologetic things about the unmade bed, while he looked behind the door and quickly scanned the room. He said, "Don't worry about that, Ma'am; I just have to make sure there's nobody else here." He closed the door behind him and continued down the hall, presumably to check the other rooms.

*So my word isn't enough; he still has to check it out. Okay.*

A second thought occurred to me: whom was he addressing, when he called out, "What do I do?" Was it Agent Fosca? If so, did that mean Fosca was the Big Honcho in this whole Super Inspection, or whatever you'd call it? Did the DEA always outrank everybody else in this sort of undertaking?

I went back to the kitchen and poured myself a glass of water and opened the freezer to get ice cubes. I heard Fosca's voice outside on the patio, raised slightly to carry over the noise of the small crowd around him, "Would you accompany us to the lab, Doctor Borodin, if you please?"

Shura's voice replied, "Certainly. Glad to."

My tall white-maned magician led Fosca through the dining room, down the hallway and through the back door — as he had done the last time — probably only vaguely aware of the number of people following him. There was a tall, heavy man in a light grey suit and red tie, with a tight, hard face; following him, a short, dark-haired woman who gave me a quick smile; she was wearing a jacket that said DEA, and carried a camera case; after her came a young, open-faced Japanese gentleman, whose jacket proclaimed

STATE NARCOTICS, and finally, a slender man in his 40's with curly hair and a pleasant, intelligent face, dressed in slacks and tweed jacket, who inclined his head briefly in greeting as he passed by me.

I stood, ice water in hand, as the crowd made their way outside, and saw my old friend, Officer Uncle, returning from his room check. He came up to me and asked, "Ma'am, do you have any guns in the house?"

Oh, God, I thought and said, "Yes, I have one."

"Where is it, Ma'am?"

I whispered, "Under my bed."

*That's funny. Why did I have to whisper? Probably because there's an instinct to be secretive about having a gun and about where you keep it. Jesus, I hope he's not going to go back into the bedroom and look under the bed; he'll see all the dust, and I'll die of embarrassment forever.*

But all he said was, "Okay. Just don't go into the bedroom, Ma'am, until we're all through, if you don't mind."

I actually smiled with relief. "Oh, I won't, sir. I promise you I won't."

*I guess I don't look the dangerous type. That's good.*

Suddenly, it occurred to me that this whole extraordinary event, this — what would you call it? — polite invasion, vehicles, people, moon suits, everything, should be photographed for posterity. Or at least for us to enjoy, maybe on cold winter evenings in front of a fire. I could imagine us leafing through the album and saying to each other, "Remember this? All those people with guns in their belts, the cute little decontamination truck, the warrants, the guys in moon suits, ah, what an amazing day that was!"

I went and got the camera.

Just as I was aiming it at the cars and trucks and the uniformed people lounging against their bumpers, above the house in the parking area, a male voice behind me said, "Ah, please don't do that, Ma'am," and I turned to see another member of the Sheriff's Department, a younger man this time, who was looking anxious and apologetic.

"What's the matter?" I asked, although I already knew the answer.

"We'd rather you didn't take pictures, Ma'am, if you don't mind," he said, "Because, you know, some of the officers are undercover, and it wouldn't — ah —,"

"Oh, of course," I said, locking the camera and putting it down on the dining room table, "I didn't think about that."

*Dammit. I'd give anything to have photos. Maybe I can put on my tape recorder without anyone knowing. What if they find out? Could get angry. Don't want anyone angry. Keep it peaceful and friendly, and we may survive all this — whatever it is.*

I went into the living room and sat down on my old blue couch, and



thought to myself, how strange it was that the police, the authorities, could use cameras and tape recorders all over the place (although I hadn't actually seen tape recorders yet) but when I wanted to take photographs and tape conversations to document what was happening during this invasion of strangers, I not only wasn't allowed to, I actually felt like a criminal for wanting to do such a thing.

*That's very interesting. Why do I feel a faint sense of criminality when I think of getting things these people say on tape? Why should anyone feel they're doing something wrong if they try to record what authorities do and say? Am I identifying with the police's view of what's going on? Am I being sucked into their reality? What is their reality, then? That they are the Right people, doing the Right things, and that the rest of us are Wrong, or at least less Right than they are? And taping the police, or photographing them, is a sign of disrespect. Why? Because — because it implies that we Wrongies may be trying to catch the Righties in a mistake, maybe an important mistake. And that's disrespectful. And only the criminally inclined are disrespectful towards authorities. THAT'S IT! THAT'S IT! What brilliant thinking, by George! Brilliant!*

It might have been a rather elaborate way of getting some slight satisfaction out of this appalling day, but it felt good, and I realized I was grinning broadly, for a small, bright and pleasantly criminal moment.

I turned on the television, but couldn't concentrate on anything, even CNN. All I got out of watching the news was a nasty reminder of an old realization that the world outside, for the most part anyway, hadn't the slightest understanding of what Shura and I did, what we believed in or what we were willing to fight for. And if they did know, they would be shocked and outraged. Psychedelic drugs as research tools to understand the human mind, the human unconscious? Psychedelic drugs as tools of spiritual searching? Psychedelic drugs as ways of touching the spiritual dimension, and whatever it is we tentatively call God, The Great Spirit, the Ground of Being, and a thousand other names? Never heard of such rubbish, most of them would say.

I turned off the television and walked back toward the kitchen. As I came through the door, I could hear a male voice on the patio saying, "And he describes what it's like, you know, what you feel if you take them at different dosages, what happens if you —" but the speaking stopped as someone in his audience apparently caught sight of me. The voice had been enthusiastic and admiring, not antagonistic. I glanced outside, casually, wearing my usual friendly half-smile, as I passed by the glass doors and headed down the hall. What I saw was the young Japanese man from State Narcotics, perched on a brick ledge, facing a group of five officers seated around the patio table, under the big canvas umbrella, some of them eating lunch. There were shiny red and green soft drink cans on the white metal

surface.

*Oh, that's right; these people bring their own food and drink so they don't have to risk being poisoned or something in a suspect's house.*

So he's read *PIHKAL* and he liked it, I thought, with a rush of affection for the one person in this whole pile of law enforcement who might have some positive feelings towards us.

I had nowhere to go in the hallway, so I went out the back door and stood there for a few moments, wondering what to do next. Then I heard voices, far down the dirt path that led to the lab.

*They're coming back. Wonder what happened this time.*

Up the hallway again. I was wearing only socks on my feet, so nobody could hear me coming. Which is why I was able to catch the tail end of a sentence spoken by the same big, grey-suited, unfriendly looking man I'd seen following Shura to the lab, earlier. He was standing with his back to me and I heard him clearly say, "— up to me, they'd demolish this whole damned place, just bring in a fucking bulldozer and plow it under," and his right hand made a wide, all-inclusive sweep in the air.

*Who the hell is THAT? He dresses civilian, I've never seen him before today, and he obviously hates us. Who is he and what's he doing here?*

There was an uncomfortable silence as I came into view, moving purposefully toward the kitchen, again. I thought once more of trying to sneak a tape recorder into some corner of the dining room, near enough to the sliding glass doors to perhaps catch conversation on the patio, but I couldn't think of any way to do it without being seen.

*Aha! Maybe if I take a drinking glass into the storage room, I can put it against the outer wall and hear what's being said outside on the patio. Won't hurt to try.*

I stepped down into the little room with its shelves and shelves of everything from instant rice to light bulbs, carrying with me a clean glass which I put, for the moment, next to a batch of evaporated milk cans. The corner of the room next to the wall was piled high with cardboard flats of cat food cans, and I began, in the almost-dark (I hadn't turned on the light), to lift the cardboard flats out of my way, stacking them in the middle of the floor. Suddenly, I was startled by a loud knock, and came around the edge of the open door to see who it was, a flat of small cans still in my hands.

A young female officer, rather short and chunky in her blue jacket, but with a round, pretty face, peered in at me and asked, "Would it be all right if I used your bathroom, Ma'am?"

"Yes, of course. It's the door next to this, to your right. You don't have to ask my permission; use it any time you want!"

*Well, she's seen me here, in the shadows, holding a flat of cans, apparently busy. There's no way I can stand in the corner, holding a glass to the wall, now. I*

*could only have done that if nobody knew I was in here. I'll just have to leave and take the flat into the kitchen, and look as if I'm busy doing something that makes sense. Too bad. I would have enjoyed at least TRYING to overhear them.*

By the time the lady had come out of the bathroom, I had opened two of the little cans and was obviously carrying them somewhere, presumably to feed cats. She smiled at me and said, "Thank you; that feels better!" and we both laughed.

*I guess there's nothing like the joy of relieving a full bladder to forge a bond between strangers.*

When I returned from the cat porch (actually, considering the cast of characters who scrambled up there every night to feed on the cats' leftovers, it should have been called the "cat-raccoon-'possum porch"), three people were seated at the dining table. Agent Fosca had his back to me, Shura was opposite him and at the head of the table was the slender man with the tweed jacket and intelligent face who had nodded to me earlier as he followed the group going to the lab.

Fosca had his big yellow legal pad in front of him again. Shura was leaning an elbow on a stack of record books, engaged in conversation with Tweed Jacket. As I came into the kitchen, a few feet away from them, Shura looked up and made a grand gesture toward the stranger, telling me, "Alice, this is Mr. Joseph Goode from Washington. He's a chemist!"

Mr. Goode rose halfway from his chair, smiling; I nodded to him and sat down in my usual place, a carved captain's chair on the border between dining room and kitchen, where the smoke from my cigarette wouldn't intrude on people at the table.

For the next couple of hours, I sat and watched a three part drama, starring an increasingly frustrated DEA agent who kept trying to get answers to detailed questions from a slightly manic chemical genius, who was finding it easier to make himself understood to an obviously interested and even enthusiastic chief DEA chemist. The possibility that I might be watching the game called, "Good cop, bad cop," never entered my mind.

(Mr. Goode turned out, as we discovered later, to be the most highly-placed administrator in the DEA's headquarters, who had once been a chemist and knew the jargon; he'd been flown out from Washington, D.C., where he headed up the main DEA testing lab, just to join this investigation and act as interpreter of Shura's sophisticated chemistry-language to Agent Fosca.)

I watched Mr. Goode doing his best to translate the chemical concepts and ideas to the agent, while occasionally being distracted by the fun of the chemistry that was pouring out of Shura. At times, Fosca would draw a deep breath and complain, politely, that he wasn't getting the specific answers he needed for his report, at which both Shura and Goode

would calm down and turn their heads towards the agent, and Mr. Goode would translate and explain, slowly and carefully, while Shura's eyes lost their twinkle briefly, and I could see in his face that he had remembered, yet again, where he was and what was going on at this table.

What I heard, generally speaking, were exchanges like this:

"This item here, do you have a record of that purchase?"

"Yes, of course, let me get it for you."

"I would like to take this with me, if you don't mind."

"Certainly, feel free!"

"Why do you have this amount of 2C-B in a bottle in your lab?"

"As I told you earlier, I use it for —" and he repeated what he had said in the lab.

(Followed by translation by Mr. Goode.)

"What do you use (this or that material or solvent) for?"

"Well, mostly I use it for —," then a rapid-fire list of chemical compounds, or intermediate steps to them.

(Translation by Mr. Goode.)

By this time, it was obvious even to me that this was not the kind of inspection we'd had before, and that Mr. Agent Fosca was doing more than just being over-conscientious. And Fosca didn't seem to have any satisfactory answer to the question that both Shura and I had asked three weeks earlier, and were asking again today. At one point, when Shura had gone to the office to get something, I asked it once more, "Why didn't our good friend, Paul, and all the previous inspectors who saw exactly the same conditions, tell us that something was out of order?"

Fosca shifted his chair so that he could glance in my direction, while still making notes on his pad. He said, "Well, sometimes friends don't like to say things; you know how it is. And it's also possible that your friend Paul didn't know all the regulations that applied to your license. He was an administrator, after all, not a lab specialist."

I persisted, "But the DEA inspectors should have known the regulations. Why didn't they say anything?"

Mr. Fosca looked at me and replied, a faint touch of impatience in his voice, "They were probably incompetent inspectors, Ma'am. Unfortunately, not all our inspectors are as good as they should be."

I still didn't get the message; I leaned forward, "Both teams of inspectors, Mr. Fosca? All four of them incompetent?"

This time, his impatience was obvious. He looked down at his papers and back up at me, and said abruptly, "It happens, Ma'am; sad to say, it happens."

*Incompetent. He can't possibly mean that. Is he making a joke? No, this man isn't joking. He's telling me — us — that this is his answer, and this is the way*

*the story is going to be told. He's saying, Give It Up, Drop It.*

I was finally beginning to understand.

It had certainly taken me long enough.

Shortly after Shura returned to the table, the young Japanese State agent came in and made a remark to him, in a distinctly friendly voice, that no signs of criminal activity had been found, anywhere, and that the Good Doctor should keep in mind that this was merely a regulatory inspection. He was obviously trying to be reassuring; he also sounded relieved.

*Well at least they've played it straight; they didn't plant anything on us, thank God.*

The next act of the play took place in mid-afternoon, when Mr. Goode and Shura had left the table for the moment, to hunt down some reference in the office. Agent Fosca had changed his seat to the side of the table opposite me, and he drew out of his briefcase a large file of papers. Even from where I sat, across the room, I recognized a blurred photocopy of an interview with Shura and myself, which had been published by the interviewer, several months earlier, in a well-known counterculture magazine, (although we had given the interview for a book that was being written, not for publication in any magazine). It had amused and slightly annoyed us, when we saw the article in print, but we'd forgotten about it, until now. I said, brightly, "I see you've got a copy of the Flying High article!"

Fosca looked up at me and replied, in absolute seriousness, "Yes. You're famous," he said, "And your fame has saved you."

"What?" I was dumbfounded. What did he mean, our fame had saved us? From what?

*Besides, we don't have fame. Fame is the cover of Newsweek or Time. We're just well-known in a very small, specialized world.*

"Did you ever give scheduled drugs to the people in your research group?" asked Fosca, changing the subject.

My stomach twisted. What an idiotic question, I thought.

"No, Mr. Fosca," I said, "Please keep in mind that the book is fiction. The story part of it, I mean. Fiction."

"Yes, well," said Fosca, "A lot of people don't think it's fiction."

"Well, it is, Mr. Fosca. No matter what people may think."

"If I ever hear from any of your research group," continued Mr. Fosca of the DEA, "If any one of them ever comes to me and tells me that you gave them scheduled drugs —"

"Well, that's not likely, Mr. Fosca, because it never happened."

*Fosca has goofed. He shouldn't have let himself get into any kind of discussion about PIHKAL. This whole nasty business is not supposed to have anything to do with a book. It's purely a matter of regulations and making sure*

*Shura is doing things safely and legally. Nothing to do with a book. But at least I know for sure, now, what this is all about. It's called headquarters being mad as hell about PIHKAL. It's called letting us know who has the power, who has the clout, and who has to be feared.*

When Shura and Mr. Goode returned and took their seats at the table, the questioning continued, most of it around specific amounts of certain precursors which had been ordered from this or that chemical supply company. Then, finally, Mister Fosca was finished.

At this point, the strangest — and certainly the most schizophrenic — of all the events of the day took place. Agent Fosca was standing, packing up his notes, pads and various pieces of paper he had taken from Shura, when two jacketed men made their way into the dining room. Each of them held a copy of *PIHKAL*, and they asked Shura if he would autograph their rather worn books. He said he'd be delighted, and asked me to add my signature. Sure, said I, and obliged. Then a third agent (whose identifying back I couldn't see) asked if he might buy a copy. Of course, we said, and Shura brought out two books, and stripped the shrink-wrap off one of them, to allow for autographing. Another agent picked it up and began leafing through the pages, muttering, "Interesting, interesting," so we urged him to accept the second book as a gift, neither of us being sure that he could do so, under these rather peculiar circumstances. After a moment's hesitation, he thanked us and requested that we autograph the copy, which we did with genuine pleasure.

Mr. Fosca, having tucked his papers inside a briefcase, left the table and headed down the hallway in the direction of Basement Four. I watched him go, wondering if he was embarrassed, angry, or completely indifferent to the book-signing.

*Did they ask Fosca ahead of time if they could do this, or is it all a surprise to him, too? Wonder how he feels about it. He can't be too pleased. How nice a thing to have happened! How totally crazy and nice!*

Shura's facade of pleasantness cracked only once, when — toward the end of the visit — the big Uncle-policeman who had asked me, hours before, whether I had a gun, poked his head around the sliding glass door and asked, "Do you have any peyote cactus here, Ma'am?"

I answered, "Yes, of course, right behind you, against the wall."

There were several people on the patio, and every one of them froze, as if I had pointed out a boa constrictor in a corner. Then Uncle chuckled, "I *thought* so! I just had a feeling...."

Suddenly, there was a lot of activity around our little cactus friends. Somebody asked Shura why he had peyote cactus growing in pots, and Shura, seated at the dining table, talked through the open glass doors to the men outside, telling them about the completely unknown and un-named

trace alkaloids which no one had yet analyzed. He spoke enthusiastically, comfortable in the knowledge that his license covered his possession of the cacti.

A short, heavy Asian man in his forties, with a large, tight face, pushed his way forward and leaned against the edge of the sliding door. He looked at Shura and spoke very clearly, emphasizing every word, "Doctor Borodin, we are going to have to take your peyote cactuses away. They are going to have to be destroyed. Do you understand?"

Shura rose, his face showing disbelief. "But I have a legal right to possess them, sir," he said, "My DEA license covers them; please check the regulations, and you'll find that I'm right."

Someone else spoke up, "Go get Fosca."

While Fosca was being summoned, the group of agents moved this way and that, looking down at the cacti, stooping down to examine them more closely, pointing out various interesting details to their companions. I leaned forward in my captain's chair, watching them.

*Well, well, so these DEA agents don't recognize peyote when it's right under their noses! Weird. When I pointed them out, they acted as if the poor little things might fly up and bite them. They're actually frightened of them, or is it that they're scared of what they think some of that cactus can do inside their heads or their souls? That's more like it. They've heard words like "crazy," and "psychotic," and they imagine all sorts of terrible amorphous horrors, because everyone's told them that's what you get when you eat a piece of one of these little soft green things.*

Agent Fosca came on the scene, and the stocky Asian man with the angry face took his arm and pointed at the cacti. Then he pulled Fosca off to the side of the patio and spoke urgently into his ear. Shura waited by the glass doors, eyes riveted on the two men. After a moment, Fosca walked over to where Shura stood and said, almost apologetically, "I'm afraid the cacti will have to go, Doctor Borodin."

"But I've been keeping them for years to do analytical work on them. Where in the regulations does it say I can't keep a peyote to do analysis for the alkaloids?"

"Show me," replied Fosca, "Where there's a cut, or where you've taken a slice; there isn't any sign of work being done on any of them, is there?"

"Not yet," said Shura, desperately, "I haven't had time yet. But that's what they're here for —"

He was interrupted by the Asian gentleman, who brought his face within a foot of Shura's and spat out, "We are taking the cactuses, Doctor, and if you keep on arguing about it, I'm going to have to read you your rights and put on the handcuffs. Am I making myself clear?"

He squinted at Shura long enough to see that he had made his point,

then turned and gestured to the other men. They stooped and got to work.

Shura sat down again, slowly, like an old man with painful joints. There was no way to help it; all the people in that patio could tell they'd wounded him. I swore to myself that they would not read hurt in my face, but it didn't matter; Shura was the target, and they'd gotten to him. He was the one they wanted to punish, and Mr. Fosca and his hostile friend had the satisfaction, finally, of tearing the mask of cheerful pleasantness off Shura and exposing the helpless anger and sorrow underneath it.

The peyote were his darlings, his treasures, his honored and respected friends, full of mysteries called alkaloids, mysteries called Time and Space and Pattern and Meaning; it had taken ten years for the baby peyotes to grow to the modest size they now were, and before our eyes they were being ripped out of their pots and trampled under boots. We both turned our heads away.

*It's done. Even if they apologize later, it's done. If I were not on another path, I would be tremendously tempted to shape a curse on these people. But it would be wrong; it would poison me to carry that kind of hate inside. They even believe it's all right to enjoy a moment of triumph over a person like Shura, to enjoy his pain, because he's the Bad Man, the enemy, and they are the Good and Righteous. And it's okay. They'll die, some day, then they'll understand what they've done. They'll feel exactly what we're feeling right now, and they'll see what the Divine Cactus really is.*

By 5:00 p.m. it was all over. They were gone, leaving behind a promise by Mr. Fosca to return the next day for more questions and answers.

Late that night, curled up together in our bed, we summarized and speculated and reassured each other, and Shura said, "After all, keep in mind that, if this were Guatemala or Bolivia, they would simply have stood us up against the patio wall and executed us, right?"

"You have a point. And they didn't plant anything, either."

"So it isn't all bad."

"And they didn't take the house apart and they didn't remove our letters and computers."

"They still could, you know; they still might."

"No, honey," I said, "Tomorrow, we get in touch with that lawyer you liked when you talked with him over the phone, remember? You said he sounded intelligent and to the point and if you ever needed a lawyer ..."

"Yes, yes. Good idea. Cassman. First thing tomorrow, I'll give him a call."

"And we'll take every damned piece of correspondence out of here and — well, we'll put them somewhere safe."

"Let's wait and see what the lawyer advises."



"And we can back up all our writing and put the floppies in the care of friends, just in case they do take the computers," I added, not really believing that was going to happen, at this point.

"Remember," said Shura, "Tomorrow, the bastards are coming back for the last mop-up."

"You know, they were really amazingly polite, all in all. They even asked permission to use the bathroom. Wonder why they were so polite?"

"Stomping little peyote cacti under foot is not what I call good manners," he said, and the hurt was back again. I hugged him and kept quiet.

Fosca did return on Friday, this time with one fellow agent. The questioning took only a couple of hours, and was mostly a review of what had been asked and answered the previous day. The one important — and new — statement from Mr. Fosca was as follows:

"Washington wants your license, Dr. Borodin. That's the bottom line."

Shura, calm and quiet and not smiling today, said, "I assumed as much."

There was a discussion about whether, by offering to relinquish the license without a battle, Shura might guarantee that he would not be fined or further attacked by County, State or Federal authorities. And Agent Fosca repeated what he had said the day before, "It's not up to me, Doctor; I'm just a soldier, doing my job."

*And although we're sure we know who the General is, we'll never prove it. And what good would it do if we could? He gave the order, and it must have gone like this: "Get the bastard. Close him down. He's an embarrassment to us, with this book, and I want our license off his wall. Anyway you can manage it. Keep it legal, but get that license from him." Yes, something like that. But one thing they can't do; they can't stop us from writing. They can't stop the information from going out. There's the First Amendment to the Constitution, and it's still alive and well. Maybe not forever, the way things are going, but long enough.*

Finally, the Great Inspection was over. Or appeared to be.

A few days later, we went to the law offices of Mr. Ted Cassman, who turned out to be sharply intelligent, with a marvelously wry smile and a gently sardonic sense of humor, and told him our story.

The day after that, Shura and I brought carton after carton of letters — correspondence going back more than a decade — to the law offices, and left them there, as we'd been given permission to do by our new attorney.

What did we learn from all this? For one thing, that what one DEA inspector, years before, had referred to in his reports as a "quaint" laboratory, could be described by a later one in *his* report, as a "pigsty;" that just because you have absolute certainty as to your own rightness and the value

and merit of what you do, you are not immune — nobody is immune — to attack by others who believe equally strongly that you are mistaken, wrong, and perhaps even truly "bad." For the most part, however, if the people you have annoyed are part of the government, their actions against you will be motivated less by beliefs or philosophies which run counter to your own, than by the simple desire to remind you that they have far more power than you do, and that, even if you don't fear that power, you should at least have a healthy respect for it.

(If you don't want, or can't afford, to take the risk of bringing down on your head some of the weight of the Great Grey Battleship of Government Authority, get out of the game and keep quiet.)

We also learned that, despite hostility and desire to punish, in this case at least, one government agency played it straight and did not do anything illegal. They did pull a few dirty tricks, as explained below, and lies were told, but nothing was planted on us, and soil samples were not doctored.

Finally, there was one lesson learned which was quite unexpected, and perhaps among the most valuable, since it had to do with human behavior. It was an insight into what I call the prosecutorial mind-set, and I had never understood this aspect of it before we saw it in action. I can put it this way: when people who are in law enforcement go into a place (in our case, a home) where there is a possibility of finding something amiss, they do not think, "I wonder if this person (suspect) is guilty of wrongdoing or not?" They do seem to go in thinking, "What can we find here which will help us make a case against this individual?"

The mind-set is one of assumption that something wrong has been done, whether it is a civil or criminal matter. The truth is, anyone who has spent time in law-enforcement of any kind, at any level — from beat cop to district attorney — gets used to people being found guilty of breaking regulations or laws. After a certain time, an unconscious assumption takes root, "If he weren't guilty, he wouldn't be under suspicion." Considering their day-to-day experiences, it is understandable that they should develop this perspective, but it is not good, either for them as individuals, or for the community which they serve.

Aftermath:

As I've explained earlier, the men in moon suits had been called in by the DEA to take samples of soil, both from the sump outside the lab, and from portions of the hill in that same area. It wasn't hard to guess that the DEA hoped to have the State Environmental Protection people do what the DEA wanted done: find severe pollution and order Shura's lab destroyed as

a hazard to the community.

All the moon suits found, however, was a fraction too much mercury in one soil sample, and Shura followed up with the right sequence of actions, involving expensive soil-removal companies with steel drums and special trucks, who hauled away the offending yards of dirt. There were no other complaints.

Some months later, the DEA, obviously frustrated, brought in the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, hoping that *they* would do a better job. Their representatives were friendly, and made some suggestions, such as a fan to be set in the wall, to better ventilate the lab (Shura complied immediately), and a few other, very reasonable precautions against glass test tubes falling off shelves in an earthquake (Shura got to work on the problem), and these inspectors, too, declined to report the laboratory as a threat to humanity.

The magical laboratory still stands. In their official paper detailing their reasons for wanting Shura to relinquish his license, Agent Fosca reported that he felt extremely ill the day following the Thursday inspection, which he attributed to unknown hazardous influences in the lab air. Shura and I remember him clearly, that very same day-after, sitting with the single fellow agent, telling us about two *other* agents from the Thursday event who had fallen ill and couldn't come to work, after having breathed the air of the Dangerous Lab. Fosca, himself, was obviously fit and healthy, and did not claim to have felt any noxious, toxic effects.

We were told, later, that much of the film shot within the lab that Thursday, when developed, was unaccountably flawed and browned. Unusable. (When we heard that, we laughed and laughed, and I whistled the Twilight Zone theme.)

Not long after that Thursday, Mr. Fosca (with one fellow agent in tow) paid a visit to our friend Peter's laboratory in a San Francisco hospital, where Shura works once a week, doing research on nicotine. Mr. Fosca was more of a bully with the young Dr. Seltzer. He was, in fact, quite aggressive, mistaking Peter's quiet gentleness for weakness. Peter is, indeed, a very polite person, but his tolerance for rudeness is extremely limited, and he reached a boiling point within minutes; he gritted his teeth and continued answering questions, but an anger began to burn which was still throwing off sparks six months later.

Among other things, Mr. Fosca, it turned out, insisted on seeing "All your phenethylamines," which was a foolish request, since the only phenethylamines present in the lab (as Peter told him) were reference samples, of no use to anyone except as analytical standards in various chromatographic assays. However, the demand made glaringly clear that Mr. Fosca was focused on the main subject of *PIHKAL* — phenethylamines

— not on scheduled drugs in particular (the laboratory has its own DEA license) or on safety conditions or correct lab procedures. He didn't ask to be shown tryptamines; he didn't make a request for opiates; he didn't show any interest in stimulants; Mr. Fosca's insistence on seeing specifically any and all phenethylamines was tantamount to an admission that this lab inspection, too, was in reprisal for the publication of a book that had "Phenethylamines" in its title.

It was also a not very subtle attempt to poison the working conditions for one employee, Dr. Alexander Borodin.

A couple of mean-spirited actions (in the time of Watergate, this kind of thing was known as Dirty Tricks) were taken by person or persons unknown, after the Great Invasion. One day, a man representing the DEA, but otherwise not identified to Shura, made a phone call to an administrator at the Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute, with which Shura was linked by his job at the research lab.

To the administrator, the un-named man said, in effect, "Why do you employ a man like Doctor Borodin? Don't you realize he's one of the worst environmental polluters in the county?" The bewildered administrator mentioned the call to Peter, who told him what was going on, and informed him what the EPA inspectors had really found: of several samples taken and analyzed, one contained an amount of mercury just above the acceptable limit. It was easily cleaned up, and there were no other problems.

Second of the dirty tricks: two large chemical supply companies, with whom Shura had maintained a good business relationship for over 25 years, suddenly informed him that their rules of doing business had changed and that they, regretfully, had found it necessary to close his accounts with them. It was not, of course, possible to prove pressure by the authorities, and there would have been nothing gained by doing so.

The seemingly nice, sympathetic DEA chemist, Mr. Goode, upon meeting a friend of ours at a Washington, D.C. social function, was asked, "I hear you met the famous Doctor Borodin out West; what was your impression of him?" To which Mr. Goode replied, stiffly, "I haven't the slightest idea what you're talking about; I've never met the man," then turned and walked away.

Shura's possession of the peyote cacti was confirmed as being perfectly legal under his license. There was only one reason to destroy them, which was to cause pain.

A year later, having faced the fact that a court battle to retain his license would cost more than we could possibly afford, and realizing that in the end, he would undoubtedly be found guilty of having broken DEA lab rules (ignorance of the law is no excuse), Shura relinquished his analytical license and submitted to a heavy fine of \$25,000, levied by a local deputy District Attorney who dismissed out of hand the suggestion that

what was being attacked was, in truth, not broken rules, but a book.

Never again will Shura work with a sense of absolute freedom; he's had a taste of that particular form of power-flexing peculiar to people who are employed by government agencies. The authorities intended to frighten him and perhaps they even hoped to silence him, but that is not and will not be possible, while we are alive and able to speak and write. We felt, and still feel, that drug use is the right of a free adult citizen, as long as there is information supplied as to proper and safe use of each drug. Drug abuse, we believe, should be the concern of the medical community, not the police. We are far from alone in this point of view, but it runs counter to the presently accepted official policy in this country.

Education and legal access would, almost overnight, eliminate the drug cartels, the street wars and inner city killings associated with the drug / money/power circuit. But the education would have to be just that: education, *not* propaganda. (Several generations of high school and college students have grown up ignoring and disbelieving everything they've heard from officials and police about drugs, including information that was factual and valid, because they had discovered for themselves that most of what had been taught them was simply not true.)

Nobody in a position of real power and influence in government has the courage to say, publicly:

"We made a mistake. Certain drugs which are now illegal can be used by healthy adults with relative safety and no threat of addiction, but you have to know what their effects are and how to use them properly. These include most psychedelics. Other drugs can be used safely by most people, but could be habituating to a few. Those few must have access to good medical care if they get into trouble. Some drugs seem to be either harmful or addicting to most users, and we will do our best to inform you fully regarding their effects and track records, as we now do with prescription drugs. Drug education will be provided across the country and the teachers will no longer be police or politicians, but physicians, chemists and pharmacologists who specialize in this field."

Most of those who believe that the War on Drugs is destructive, unwinnable and morally wrong, tend to blame an almost universal ignorance on the part of lawmakers, as well as most of the general public, about drugs in general and most particularly about the psychedelics and their appropriate uses in psychotherapy and spiritual exploration. It is also possible to

blame the extraordinarily lucrative industries that have grown in response to the needs of the drug-war: urine testing, prison-building and maintenance and expansion of military power, among others, as explained later in Shura's chapter, "Cui Bono."

I blame something else. I believe that there is an intense, unconscious fear of the hidden depths of the human psyche, and an unacknowledged certainty that the Shadow, the dark side, is indeed the final, terrible, rockbottom truth about the nature of mankind. This fear, in most of us, has been nurtured in a thousand ways by family and culture, and too often by religion. Until there is a growth of understanding of the Shadow side of us, and realization that it is possible for that dark aspect to undergo transformation, this fear and hostility towards anything that opens up the human unconscious will continue. The present beginnings of a police state will flower into something still called the United States, but unrecognizable as a democracy and a land of freedom.

As far as the human species is concerned, if it is to survive much longer on earth, it will have to urge its best minds and most moral souls to devote their time and energy to further and deeper study of the human psyche and its dark side, using all the tools available, including psychedelic drugs and plants. Otherwise, between nuclear power, bacteriological mutations, ecological devastation and the rising anger of hungry, deprived people all across the world, our civilizations and our very species may have a short future indeed.

## CHAPTER 2. LOURDES

(Alice's voice)

One evening, I brought home a video tape of a movie. I told Shura, "This one's pure action, and it's famous for the special effects. It's called 'Terminator 2' and I thought we might give it a try."

He said, "Sure, why not," and then I filled him in on the gossip part of things — who the Great Arnold was, whom he had married, and the fact that his greatest virtue, I gathered, was that he didn't take himself too seriously. I said that the plot might or might not be terrific, but that in a movie like this, you don't pay attention to plot, just to the action and special effects.

I should add, parenthetically, that the only time Shura will sit still to watch a movie, or anything else on television, is when we've set aside an evening to spend with each other, usually once or twice a week. We call it "closing off," and we do just that; phone calls go on the answering machine, we warm up the bedroom with the little floor heater if it's winter, or turn on the big portable fan if it's the middle of summer, and we find music on the radio, and we make love and talk. By the time we're ready to leave the bed and heat up some good soup on the stove, we will have discussed everything that has happened during the past few days: phone calls we forgot to share, our worries and delights, and everything else we could think of.

When the soup is hot, we go into the living room and watch something on television. We both love "Northern Exposure," even in reruns, and perhaps I will have taped a few really interesting things, like an archeological dig in ancient Mayan ruins, or a documentary on the gangsters of the '30's, which I urge him to watch in the interests of his general education. (I sincerely believe that anyone raised in the United States who doesn't know anything about the St. Valentine's Day Massacre is suffering from severe cultural deprivation.)

Or I will have rented a movie, as was the case last night.

In the beginning of Terminator 2, there is a scene where the first

Terminator — the "good" one — is about to be delivered onto the floor of a wide, dimly-lit alley, in the middle of the night, his naked body spilling out of a patch of darkness. He has been sent there from the future. Before he appears, there is a lot of fancy crackling and zapping of electricity. I explained to Shura that all the lightning effects were — in case he was wondering — "A rent in the space-time continuum, of course," to which he grunted, as I continued, "There are always lots of electromagnetic disturbances when you tear a hole in the space-time continuum." Shura replied with a barely detectable nod of the head, knowing full well how much I know about electromagnetism and/or space-time continuums.

The movie was tremendous fun, as I'd hoped it would be. And today, in an idle moment, thinking about rents in time and space with or without lightning bolts, I remembered the closest I ever came — at least consciously and knowingly — to a real place where such a rent, such a tear, had actually happened.

The place is a very famous grotto in a town called Lourdes, in the south of France, and Shura and I stopped there — at my urging — during a trip to Europe in the early '80's.

We had attended a conference in northern Germany, at which Shura had given a talk. Now, we had embarked on the rest of our adventure, which included a stop in Lourdes, to be followed by a train trip along the French and Italian Rivas, just to see what it all looked like.

After a stay overnight in a delightful little town we'd never heard of, called Libourne, (just in time for the weekly street market), we took our next train and settled down for a long stretch through beautiful wine-growing countryside around the Bordeaux area. As we watched through the train windows, the rolling hills and fields, the miles of grapevines and fruit trees, richly green against red-brown earth were — very gradually — replaced by a flatter, increasingly drier landscape. The earlier large, neatly tended cottages with their pretty gardens slowly gave way to little houses with bare, untended yards, unmistakable evidence of the depression of spirit and loss of energy that seeps in with poverty.

Most people of my children's generation have never heard of Lourdes and don't have the slightest idea who Saint Bernadette was. People of my age, in the United States at least, had some exposure to the story of the miracle of Lourdes when the movie, "The Song of Bernadette," came out — I think it was in the '40's — making a young actress, Jennifer Jones, famous and sending people like me to the libraries and bookstores to find out more.

I've always had a strong interest in so-called miracles, and I read everything available about Bernadette Soubirous. She was a not-very-bright 14 year-old who, in 1878, happened on a cave in the side of a hill near her village, where she was greeted by a Being she called "The Lady," and



found herself in trouble when she told other people about it. Ever since I'd seen the movie and read those books, I had wanted to visit the actual place, to see and feel it for myself.

The grotto had become a Catholic shrine, famous for healings that had reputedly taken place (for a few lucky people), when water from the "miraculous" spring had been drunk, bathed in, or poured onto a sick limb or troubled head. The spring had come into being when the Lady told young Bernadette to scratch in the earth just inside the shallow cave; when water bubbled up, she informed the child that the water was holy and had the power to heal.

I knew that the shrine at Lourdes had become big business, and I was prepared for the inevitable commercialization and cheapening of it. I didn't care about any of that, and since I'm not a Catholic I wasn't coming to see the grotto with expectations of a cure or any kinds of answers to deep questions. I just wanted to see the actual rock, or cave, or tunnel, or whatever the grotto turned out to be, where the original miracle had taken place.

When I first proposed that we visit Lourdes, Shura had been his usual accommodating self, and said he thought it might be an interesting experience to actually see the site of a long-past miraculous event. He would roll up his scientific skepticism with the extra socks in his backpack, and enjoy the adventure with me. He had only one reservation, "You realize, don't you, there'll probably be a lot of crutches hanging around and tourist junk all over the place; are you ready for that?"

"Sure, I'm expecting junk and crutches; no sweat. It doesn't make me want to see the grotto less. It's just that I've never had a chance to see a miracle site, if that's what you call it ... "

"Well, it's all right with me," said Shura, "Just don't want you to be disappointed."

The dry foothills had grown into tree-covered mountains, the Pyrenees. We took our places near the open metal gate in the foyer of the train car and stood watching the dramatic peaks and chasms flashing by, taking in lungfuls of the sharp, piney air.

The first thing visible of Lourdes was a wide river flowing clean and ice-blue far below us. Then, as the train rounded a curve, there appeared on the bank of the river — completely unexpected and somehow shocking — an immense cathedral, white and blue and gold, shining against the deep green of the hills.

*Good ok Catholic Church, they sure know how to catch your attention!*

Finally, we pulled into the Lourdes station. Shouldering our backpacks, we stepped down from the train, somewhat surprised at the number of variously capped and cloaked nurses gathered on the platform,

waiting for disabled and ill pilgrims who would need their help. There were numerous large black wheelchairs with hoods, lined up against the station wall. We didn't stay around to watch the stretchers coming off the train, but proceeded into the town to find a place to stay the night. Tired from the long ride, we registered at a modest little hotel on what appeared to be the main street, and went to bed early. Exploration would wait until morning.

The town of Lourdes, as we discovered after breakfast, is built on sloping hills which eventually take all feet down to the river which rushes, spitting and foaming under a wide, grey stone bridge.

As we made our way from our hotel along the gradually descending main street, we saw shop after shop, many with fronts open to the street, selling plastic water bottles (for the holy water from the spring) with Madonnas on them, Madonna spoons, hats, scarves, and even ashtrays. There were also little statues of Bernadette, of course, but it was obviously the Madonna who kept the tourist trade bustling.

We crossed over the river and walked into a lovely park which stretched far ahead of us to where we could see the spires of the cathedral. There were carefully tended lawns and beds of bright flowers. On the winding path we passed monks dressed in long, brown robes, sashed at the waist, walking at varying speeds. Some strolled meditatively, hands clasped behind them, while a few hurried, rosaries swinging and bouncing from their woven belts. I nudged Shura and whispered, "Looks like something out of the Middle Ages, doesn't it?" He grinned and focused his camera on a venerable patriarch in a long black robe, complete with bushy white beard and a somewhat incongruous black beret perched at a jaunty angle over his springing white eyebrows.

We came to a large oval of grass, and paused to appreciate and photograph. In the center of the oval was a stone pillar, supporting a life-sized statue of the Madonna, all of it surrounded by a bed of marigolds, petunias and tiny blue flowers I couldn't name.

We walked on until we came upon a modest statue of Bernadette Soubirous under a branching tree at the side of the path. She was kneeling over her own little garden of marigolds and pansies growing in the shade. I paused to look at the figure and Shura asked, "Is that the kid who started it all?" I said "Yes, indeed it is, bless her heart."

When we finally reached the plaza in front of the cathedral, my legs were beginning to tire. We paused to read the signs which indicated that the Grotto was somewhere to the right of the elaborate edifice towering above us. Strolling in that general direction, we soon found ourselves on a long, very wide boulevard, planted down the middle with carefully spaced trees. The river flowed to our right. To our left, as we began moving down the grey paving stones of the boulevard, was the side of the cathedral, built on top

of a cliff which continued straight ahead for what might have been a quarter of a mile before it vanished into a hillside full of trees. Against the face of the cliff there were open bins of pale blue candles, priced according to length. We exchanged amused looks.

We moved on, and after a few minutes Shura turned to me and made a suggestion, "Well, now, why don't I leave you to wander at your own pace for a while, and I'm going to get brisk and follow the pavement to where it ends, just to get a general view — okay?"

"Sure, honey," I said, "Go ahead. I'll be somewhere around here. I've just got to track down the cave, and I'll be satisfied. See ya later."

He gave me a fast kiss on the cheek, wheeled around and took off.

There were people everywhere, nurses pushing what appeared to be mostly bent-over, elderly patients in the big, black-hooded wheelchairs, but I caught sight of one young invalid with a pale face, his thin body sprawled awkwardly in the seat, going past me. There were long benches and plain wooden chairs scattered across the promenade, facing in all directions. I passed some large, dark grey, room-sized enclosures, set against the cliff, which I decided must be the baths I'd read about, where sick people were immersed in the holy water.

I still couldn't see anything ahead of me to indicate the presence of a special place, a holy cave in the cliff side. So I went up to a French gendarme who was standing near one of the planted trees, hands clasped behind him, looking very bored.

"Où est la Grotto?" I asked in my best French, feeling rather stupid.

"C'est là, Madame," he snapped, gesturing toward the cliff face ahead of me in a way that implied I had to be blind not to see it. I thanked him profusely and continued walking.

As I approached the next tree, still scanning what I could see of the cliff face beyond where I was walking, I tried to guess from the placement of benches whether I was getting nearer. Suddenly, I felt wetness on my cheeks. I stopped, completely astonished. Tears were actually flowing from my eyes, for no discernible reason. I wasn't feeling sad; in fact, I was feeling very cheerful, even a bit excited by the search. I would have described myself as actually quite happy, at that moment. Tears made no sense. I decided to ignore them, and resumed walking.

*Maybe there's more emotion in my unconscious about this whole thing than I've realized. Maybe the tears are a sign of that. Maybe maybe.*

I had gone only a little way when it occurred to me that the benches immediately ahead were placed somewhat more purposefully than most of the others on the boulevard. Two rows of them were lined up at right-angles to the rock face, separated by several yards, and four or five benches faced the cliff, connecting the ends of the rows, forming three sides of a square.

And suddenly, I saw it. The place. Not a deep tunnel into the cliff, as I had imagined, but a shallow little cave, only a few feet deep.

I breathed deeply, and stopped to look. Halfway up the curve of the cave wall, on the right, was a ledge, and on it was standing a statue — perhaps four feet high — of the Madonna. My gaze followed the back of the cave around to the left, where bunches of flowers were gathered in ceramic vases on the ground, presumably surrounding the miracle spring.

Then, as I stood there, just taking everything in, I felt it: a sense of singing, almost but not quite audible, and an intense joy that beamed out directly to me from the cave. My breath caught, and I let it out very slowly, while my body resonated with the euphoria.

*My God! It's still here! Whatever happened to Bernadette Soubirous is still going on, still alive!*

I looked at the people sitting here and there on the benches, searching for a face among them which would reflect what I was sensing from the cave; someone else who was tuned in. I couldn't spot any face which conveyed a response to that unheard singing, but there were some still figures whose heads were bent to their chests; perhaps they were feeling it, I thought, maybe they were sitting so quietly, so unmoving, not looking around, because they were bathing in that energy.

*I can't ask them, so I'll never be sure.*

I walked slowly over to where worn velvet ropes indicated the proper place to stand in line. There were only a couple of people ahead of me, and I could move at my own pace. As I went past the statue, with its white robe and blue cape, I saw on the feet, which were at my eye-level, the gold-painted roses placed next to each big toe, and my mind sang a silly phrase, "She has rosies on her toesies," as I turned away, remembering that Saint Bernadette had described The Lady as having bare feet, with a golden rose on each.

I bent down to see the bubbling water of the sacred stream, under a thick oval of glass set in the floor of the cave, then straightened up and walked out. The sense of piercing joy was still there, singing through my body.

When Shura came up to me, a few minutes later, I was sitting on a bench, facing the cave, floating in what was coming from it. I turned at the feel of his hand on my shoulder and said, "Wow, honey, what an experience!"

He said, "Tell me about it."

"Stand here for a minute. Can you feel what's coming from the cave?"

Shura looked where I was pointing, and stood very still, then shrugged, "I guess I can't, sweet potatuh. What are you feeling?"

I stood and took his hand, "Well," I began, then realized that my throat was closing on tears. I coughed and continued, "It's like a singing without any sound. And there's an intense feeling of happiness, joy; it's just beaming out from that cave as if no time has passed since the whole thing first happened."

"Wow," said Shura, adding regretfully, "Wish I could tune into it. I'm picking up something, but it's probably from you."

"That's all right," I reassured him, feeling rather selfish, wishing he could share it. "Okay, let's go," I said, pulling him by the hand, heading back the way we'd come, "Want to take a look at the cathedral?"

"Sure," said my lovely, patient man, "May as well see all the highlights, while we're here!"

I paused and opened my purse, to search for the small plastic envelope containing 120 milligrams of MDMA that I'd brought with me from home. I told Shura, "I thought I'd take this now, so that maybe I can sharpen my ability to see whatever's in the cathedral. Do you mind?"

"Go ahead," said Shura, "Whatever turns you on!"

I went over to one of the taps built into the side of the rock face, near the bins of candles, and swallowed the white powder with water held in my cupped hands. Then I rejoined Shura, who was standing where I'd left him, hands in his pockets, rocking slightly on his heels. We resumed our slow walk toward the cathedral stairs which were visible at the end of the cliff face.

I told Shura about the strange tears which had run down my face, for no apparent reason, just before I'd reached the grotto, and described all over again the radiance which had pushed into me.

We reached the bottom of the broad stairway which led up to the cathedral, and I realized that my usually tired legs not only felt strong; they were actually tingling with energy, and before I could think about it, I found myself running up the stairs, shouting something like "Yah, yah, yah!"

At the top, there was a marble apron, ringed by a balustrade, where I panted for a while until I'd caught my breath. While I waited for Shura, who was climbing the stairs in the normal way, I gave myself a chance to look inward, to see if the MDMA had perhaps taken effect much faster than usual. I could feel nothing familiar. My energy level was more than high; I felt like a teenager, but I could detect nothing yet of the expected MDMA effect.

*There hasn't been enough time to feel effects since I took it. Needs ten more minutes, maybe.*

We went into the cathedral, but after only a few moments, we turned around and made our way back out, because there was nothing important inside to be experienced, for us, and we both knew it. The

mystery was outside, in the little grotto, and all the rest was the Catholic church.

When we were walking in the park again, the cathedral behind us, I told Shura, "You know what, babe? The MDMA never took effect! I've been trying to figure out why, and I think I've got the answer. My energy level is so high — it's been extraordinary ever since I was at the grotto — I think the MDMA simply couldn't take me anywhere. I was already there! I still am, as a matter of fact," I added, laughing.

In the town, we stopped at a bookstore and when we went in, I asked for any book they might have about Bernadette Soubirous, and a young woman handed me what she explained was the only one available, a short, somewhat cheaply produced paperback in French; she apologized for not having anything in English.

Back at our hotel, I began to read, stopping occasionally to ask Shura to translate a word I didn't know, and what the little book told me was not only surprising, it was deeply satisfying. The only obvious question, I said to Shura, was why the church hadn't gotten rid of this publication, considering the holes it punched in their official story.

"It says that when the local priests told Bernadette to ask 'The Lady' what her name was, she did as she was ordered, kneeling as always at the entrance of the cave. The Lady answered, 'My name is Aquero,' which is a word used in this region to mean something like 'That's the way it is,' or 'So be it,' which made no sense to Bernadette, but she obediently carried the message back to the village authorities, who passed it on to the Vatican. After that, the Catholic church pronounced officially that the being known as The Lady was, indeed, the Madonna, mother of Christ, and would be venerated as such from then on. How do you like them apples?"

"And you're excited because the Lady didn't say she was the Madonna, is that it?"

"Yeah! She never said anything of the sort! She said, 'My name is Aquero,' which is a wonderful, in-your-face, zen kind of name, calculated to bewilder everyone, especially the church people. It's a totally new piece of information that nobody ever talks about. The church just took her over, and declared her the Madonna, and that was that. They weren't about to have some over-imaginative young girl's fantasy leaving the impression that there might be another explanation of who and what The Lady was!"

"Pretty good, I'd say," chuckled Shura, "And no one's questioned it since then, huh?"

"Of course not," I grinned, putting the book down and clasping my hands behind my neck, "And probably nobody bothers reading a little book like this, when they've come for a healing, and most of the tourists are probably Catholic anyway, and this whole Aquero thing wouldn't seem

important to them."

"Makes sense," agreed Shura.

"And the more miraculous healings there were at the spring, the more it had to be the Madonna, of course."

We were both silent, thinking to ourselves, until I got up and said I thought it was a good time for me to start packing if we were leaving on the train early in the morning.

*There's still the great question remaining: how can that blast of joyous, heart-piercing singing still be going on, so many years afterwards? Does it mean that, once a tear is made in the fabric of our reality, it stays open? Does it mean that whatever came through in Bernadette's time will continue to come through, to be caught by the occasional visitor like me? What is its message?*

I folded shirts and socks into our backpacks, trying to sort out the sensations that had pushed into and around me.

*It was a kind of love — a form of love — which simply says Yes to everything. Love as energy, love as joy, love as the only reason there is, the only meaning. Which, of course, makes no sense, considering. But there it was. There it is. All you have to do is stand in front of that place, where the original opening was made, and it's all there. Time has nothing to do with it. It's outside of time. Whatever space it exists in, it can make a bridge to where we are, and the bridge remains.*

After I'd finished repacking, we went to bed. Curled to Shura's back, I murmured, "Thank you so, so, so much, honey, for coming here for me. It was much more than I'd expected. It turns out it's a real miracle place, and I never thought I'd actually experience one. I'm very grateful, and I love you to bits."

He yawned, then said, "Love you, too, little one. See you in the morning."

I kissed his spine, said goodnight, and, with the friendly sounds of people talking and laughing as they passed in the lamplit street below, we slept.

## CHAPTER 3 THE DRED AND OTHER LEARNING EXPERIENCES

(Alice's voice)

Shura and I are very different people; in body chemistry, in the ways our minds work, in dozens of small yea's and nay's. We have different abilities and gifts, and sometimes dissimilar reactions to experimental drugs. But we are alike in a lot of ways, and one of the many things we share is an inability to enjoy marijuana. (We also share a dislike of Wagner's music, but that's another story.) We agree with the proponents of the plant about its incredible virtues, its general usefulness as a source of fabric and paper, and its well-established medical value. For millions of people around the world, it is the preferred drug for relaxation and de-stressing. We also know that it can be habituating to some. Not physically addicting, but strongly habituating, which is certainly not in its favor. But when I say we dislike it, I mean something entirely personal; we feel uncomfortable with its effects, and as Shura says, neither of us seems to be able to learn anything worthwhile from taking it.

Ah, yes. There's one exception to that non-learning statement: marijuana can be used, like no other drug I know, to slow down one's sense of time, and that can be a fascinating experience.

My first experiment with marijuana was when I was in my twenties, and it was a disastrous one. I found my awareness chopped into ten-second segments, separated by a wall of amnesia that clanged down, just as I had managed to remember who I was, where I was, and what was happening. After the wall had cut me off, I would begin the entire process of identifying myself and my reality all over again.

CLANG:

"Who am I?"

"I'm Alice."

"Oh, yes, that's right. Well, where am I?"



"Sitting on my couch, in my home."

"What am I doing?"

"I've taken marijuana, and I'm trying to make sense out of all this."

CLANG:

"Who am I?"

"My name is Alice."

And so on and so on, for hours. When I finally came out of it, I resolved never to touch the stuff again.

But, of course, people are resilient and forgetful. In my thirties, for a while, I had a boyfriend called Steven who was brilliant, arrogant and extremely controlling, and he decided that the circumstances of my first experiment with pot — mind-set perhaps — must have been wrong in some way, and he insisted that I should take it once more, with him. "I promise you," he said firmly, "This time it will be a wonderful experience. Just leave it to me!"

He took me outside, had me sit down under the trees at the back of the house, gave me a marijuana cigarette and watched while I went through the usual coughing and recovery. He kept telling me to inhale, and inhale again, "Come on, come on! I want you to give this stuff a real try, this time. Trust me, Alice. Just breathe it in, that's my girl!"

So I kept inhaling until I began to feel very dizzy. When I said I'd had enough, that's it, he let me stop. He patted my head approvingly, took the cigarette out of my fingers and finished it himself, while I sat and saw the world split into one, two, three, four levels of vision, four levels of reality, four versions of Alice watching sunlight flowing over branches and twigs, wild plants and brown-edged leaves in the dry riverbed below.

I sat cross-legged, feeling the intense push of wave after wave of sensation, wondering if it would ever mellow out, slow down, stop coming at me. It was impossible to relax, because I had to stay braced against the next surge. I didn't enjoy the feeling. I knew it wasn't dangerous or hostile, just very strong, and it made me uncomfortable.

Suddenly there was a fifth and a sixth level, and I turned to Steven and said, "I want to go in, please. Things are getting complicated."

Inside the house, seated on my couch, I counted a final total of eight levels, and wondered which was the real one, the one I had been living in before smoking the marijuana.

Looking at the eight levels or tracks from the outside, which I could occasionally do, was like seeing an eight-story apartment building with the outer wall removed. I hoped that one of the apartments was my normal

world. The other apartments looked similar, but here and there a piece of furniture — so to speak — was out of place, or a door didn't have the right shape, and everything kept shifting into something else. So I had to look carefully, to feel out every thought-form and all the not-quite-right versions of myself, if I was to sort it all out and bring an end to the loud confusion.

I glanced at my friend, seated across from me in an armchair, eyes closed, smiling, and became aware of a growing suspicion that he had known all this would happen — the fracturing, splitting —

*Wonder if this is how paranoia feels. I've got a sense that there's a secret agenda somewhere, that I'm being set up, betrayed, by somebody or something. I've got to get out. Got to find my way out.*

And on several of the eight levels or tracks, some versions of me decided, quite coldly and finally, that I'd had enough of this relationship with Steven, that it was time to stop being the classic approval-seeking victim; time to grow up and move on.

By the time the defensive mental scrambling had begun to clear, hours had gone by. The reality track that I belonged to had settled in, friendly and familiar, while the others slowly faded and thinned until finally, I was myself, I was where I belonged, and anxiety had been replaced by a lovely, simmering anger.

The next experiment with marijuana was many years later, and I shared it with Shura Borodin.

At the time, I hadn't known Shura for long — six or seven months, perhaps — and one day he invited me to go with him to a party. He phoned me on a Thursday evening and, after we'd caught up on general news, he said, "By the way, a couple of good friends of mine are having some kind of get-together on Saturday; they have a house in the woods near Santa Cruz, and I think you'd really enjoy them. Want to give it a try?"

"I'd love to, Shura. But aren't we going to the Gilbert and Sullivan thing on Saturday, with Ruth and George?"

"That's not 'til much later. The party in the woods is between noon and five-ish, so that gives us plenty of time to get back to San Francisco for Iolanthe."

"Oh, great! That'll work out nicely, then. Thank you — it sounds wonderful."

"I'll pick you up Saturday at eleven, all right?"

"I'll be ready."

It was a long drive, and the coast highway was unusually sunny; the fog hadn't yet resumed its summer habit of moving in from the ocean onto the coastal hills in the afternoon. The little car rounded a curve and we caught our breath at the sight of a particularly dramatic rock formation rising from the cobalt and silver sea. When we had passed it, Shura asked,

"Have I told you anything about Aaron and Grace, our hosts? I don't think I have."

"No, I don't remember hearing those names."

"Well, I've known them both for years; they're two of my favorite people; intelligent, funny, good friends. They co-authored a superb book on psychoactive mushrooms in ancient Scandinavia, including the use of the *Amanita muscaria* by a tribe known as the Berserkers — which you may have heard of —"

"I've heard of the Berserkers, but I didn't know about the *Amanita* part of it. That's the famous magic mushroom with the red cap and white spots, right?"

"You've got it. The one they put on the pretty Christmas cards."

We left the highway and drove uphill. Through the windows of the little green car, I caught glimpses of houses built on the slopes above and below us, snug redwood nests looking out over the blue-misted valley. Finally, Shura swung off the road, into a space between two parked cars, and announced, "Here's where we disembark. The house is about a block down from here."

Aaron met us at his gate, which was made out of raw redwood planks, and when Shura put his hand on my shoulder and introduced me, the stocky, curly-haired man smiled with real warmth, "Glad to meet you, Alice. Grace is in the kitchen, directing the food traffic." He led us down a short stairway between immense fern plants, to the front door. Inside, there was a living room with large windows, a long, worn leather couch and a couple of padded armchairs. Several oversized floor pillows were occupied (like the rest of the furniture) by a variety of sprawling people, some waving celery sticks and pretzels as they talked.

Aaron led us to the kitchen, where I was introduced to a slim woman, a few inches taller than I, who wore her long, red-brown hair in a thick braid down her back. She had a handsome, alive face, and when I said hello she leaned close to me, trying to be heard above the noise, "Hi, Alice! Make yourself at home. There's food everywhere. What would you like to drink?"

*Beautiful eyes that really see you, and the face says she laughs a lot. Lovely lady, with a figure to die for.*

Equipped with a glass of chilled apple juice, I left Shura talking animatedly with Aaron and another man he apparently knew, and made my way through sliding glass doors onto a wide deck running the length of the house. A few feet away, the trunk of an immense live-oak thrust upward through a circle cut in the weathered redwood floor, its branches and leaves shading almost the entire deck. People were everywhere, sitting and standing, talking and laughing, and I sat down on a bench, next to a long

wooden table covered with a red and white checked tablecloth. I helped myself to some potato chips and salsa from earthenware bowls, and turned around on the bench so I could watch the other guests and see Shura when he came outside.

When Shura emerged onto the deck, he spotted me immediately and waved, smiling the smile I was already in love with. He joined me on the bench, holding a glass of red wine, as usual, and asked, "How ya doin', kid?"

I said I was doing fine, and that, from what I'd seen of them, Aaron and Grace seemed like the kind of people I would enjoy knowing. He said, cheerfully, "Believe me, they are and you will!"

A little over an hour later, Shura and I and one of the guests — a tall, lanky blond man who had happily identified himself as the best unrecognized artistic genius in Northern California — were engaged in an enthusiastic discussion of an exhibit at the Oakland Museum to which Shura had taken me the previous weekend. We found ourselves competing to deliver the most devastating description of the work of the featured artist, who — we all agreed — was an absolute con-man. His name was easy for me to remember, because there was a famous classical pianist I admired who had the same name.

Suddenly, a deep voice called out, "Hey, anybody who wants to share this with me is welcome." We turned and saw, at the far end of the deck, a rather stout man with thinning hair, dressed in old jeans and a bulky, bluejacket, waving what looked like a very large, fat, black cigar. Somebody called out, "What the hell is it, Chuck?"

"It's from Africa, it's marijuana, and it's called The Dred. Don't ask me why, man, that's its name. Real good stuff, powerful. It's like nothing you ever tried before, take my word!"

Shura said to me, "Some kind of African pot, looks like. Want to try it?"

"Maybe, just a bit." I shrugged, "I haven't had much luck with marijuana, so far, sorry to say."

"It's not my particular ally, either," said Shura, "But I guess a quick toke or two isn't going to do any harm."

"Probably not."

"I usually have a rule for myself," said Shura, "Don't take anybody else's drug, especially at somebody else's house."

"Well, if you think we shouldn't —" I began, hesitantly.

"No, no," he interrupted, "I confess I'm curious about that weird looking cigar. I'm not going to take more than a couple of drags, though, just in case that name constitutes *a* warning to the consumer. I wonder how 'Dred' is spelled?"

I laughed and we both joined the line of guests waiting to sample the cigar. When it was in front of me, I drew in the smoke carefully, not wanting to have a coughing fit in front of everyone. Despite the fact that I smoked cigarettes and should have been able to handle it smoothly, drawing in pot smoke always made me cough violently.

This time was no exception. I was surrounded by understanding smiles as I made my way, stopping every few steps for a coughing fit, to the opposite end of the deck, Shura just behind me. When we reached the railing, I turned to him and said, my voice rasping, "I'm sorry; that always happens to me."

"Don't apologize." he grinned, patting me on the back, "You okay now?"

I drew a shaky breath, and told him I was fine.

We stood together, sharing impressions about the house and its surrounding trees. Our young artist friend had gone elsewhere and, looking around for him, I noticed that the owner of the cigar was walking around the deck, apparently offering second draws to those who wanted them. When he came abreast of us, Shura accepted the cigar and took a deep lungful of the smoke, then I did the same, concentrating on inhaling smoothly, this time, not hurrying it. Only one cough followed, and I recovered immediately.

Shura said to the man called Chuck, "I think we'll stop there, thanks very much."

The blue jacket moved away, and Shura looked down at me, "Would you mind if I left you on your own, for a couple of minutes? I just spotted an old friend," he gestured, "And I'd like to say hello." He hesitated, looked closely at my face, and added, grinning, "I would introduce you, but this may not be quite the moment, am I right?"

I giggled, "Yeah, I can just see me in the middle of shaking hands when the effects hit!"

Shura pressed my arm, "That's what I was thinking, too."

"Go ahead," I said, "I'll be over at the food table, in case I get the munchies."

This time, I sat on the bench facing the plates of celery stalks and carrot sticks, potato chips, and pretty painted bowls of olives and salsa. I folded my hands on the checkered cloth in front of me, waiting — a bit nervously — for something to happen. I remembered that it usually took ten to fifteen minutes between inhaling and becoming aware of the first changes, at least with ordinary marijuana.

I was still sitting there, when, a moment later, something came down fast, from over my head. It felt like a narrow tent, or cone, and it enveloped me. There was no sound within the cone. I couldn't hear the

voices of others on the deck; I couldn't hear anything. The Cone of Silence is not unknown among people who take psychedelic drugs, and it is usually associated with a feeling of peacefulness and interior quiet. But this was different. I was imprisoned, cut off. Then I realized that I was being poisoned. It was as if, from head to toe, I had been cored like an apple, and something toxic and acid-green was being poured into the hole.

I couldn't move. I sat frozen, helpless, wondering if I was going to pass out, or die. Strangely enough, there was a feeling of concern, perhaps even worry, but no real fear; my emotions, like my body, were in a state of suspension. But I could think.

*If I topple over sideways, it's going to scare everybody. Shura will be horrified, not knowing what's wrong, and I'll be dreadfully embarrassed in front of all these people. Maybe I won't fall over, if I just sit here, if I keep leaning forward onto the table until it passes. If I don't die, I'm sure it will pass.*

A hand cupped my shoulder, and Shura's voice came through the walls of the cone, sounding far away, "Are you all right, Alice?"

I couldn't manage speech. I could only sit there and hope I stayed upright.

I could see Shura's face in the periphery of my vision. He spoke again, the words echoing slightly inside the greenish cone that surrounded me, "Can you talk?"

I managed to move my head slowly from side to side.

"All right, then, my dear, listen to me carefully. I'm going to help you up and take you to where you can lie down, and then I'm going to bring you out of this, okay?"

I nodded, very slowly, my eyes fixed on the fingers tightly locked on the table before me.

I felt Shura's big hands in my armpits, and observed with calm interest that my body was standing. He guided me away from my bench, and — still holding me up — led me to a lounge chair a few feet away, at the sunny end of the deck. He lowered me into it, then pulled up a stool and sat down right in front of me, leaning one elbow on the end of the long table.

*He knows I can't move my head, so he's making sure he's within my field of vision.*

"Now, Alice," he said, speaking slowly, "I want you to concentrate on what my hand is doing. I'm putting my right thumb on top of the edge of this table, and my index finger on the bottom, and I want you to tell me how thick this tabletop is; how many inches are between my two fingers?"

*What the hell is he talking about? I'm sitting here, paralyzed and poisoned, and he's asking me to guess how thick a tabletop is! What's he DOING?"*

"I know this doesn't make sense, honey," urged Shura, "But please indulge me for a moment, okay? Just do your best to focus on my two fingers

and tell me how many inches you think there are between them."

*Oh, God, I suppose I'm just going to have to play his silly game, because he's going to keep at me until I give him an answer. All right. Concentrate. How many inches of wood between the two fingers? Looks like two. Open my mouth and say the words.*

"Two," I heard my voice croaking, "Two inches."

Shura smiled and leaned forward to grasp my hands, "You did it! Now you can move! You're going to be okay!"

I looked at him in disbelief, but my arm had already gone up to protect my eyes from the sunlight, and I realized that he was absolutely right; the paralysis had gone. I sat back and smiled shakily at him.

"How did you do that? What was all that idiotic stuff about the thickness of a tabletop?"

"It's an old trick; if you can get yourself to focus on something, *really* focus your mind on a single point, you can break out of that kind of freeze. Maybe it has something to do with getting your ego back in control; I don't know. I only know it works!"

My irritation was beginning to dissipate. It should have been completely gone, but there was still a prickle left that was hard to shake.

*I'm going to have to appear grateful, because there's no excuse for being anything else, right now. Shura rescued me; he knew what to do and I'm going to be all right. But I'm still feeling pretty edgy.*

I smiled at him and gave myself a shake. I said, "Wow!"

"Come out of the sun, Alice," my tall magician said, and held out both hands to pull me up, and when I was sure I wasn't dizzy and could move without doing anything embarrassing, he walked me slowly between small clusters of people talking on the deck. They paid us no attention, for the most part, although there was an occasional friendly, "Hi!" Shura guided me to the shaded side of the deck, where there was a rainbow-colored hammock strung between a tree trunk and a heavy post. He settled me into a big Mexican cane chair next to the post, and wiggled himself down into the hammock. Then he leaned towards me, his hands on his knees, and opened his mouth to speak.

I was watching his face, wondering what he was going to say, when his color changed, and his hands flew apart to grasp the edges of the hammock. Then he was propelling himself like a rocket out of the big woven cradle, and I watched him run, staggering a bit, into the house.

It was probably no more than ten or fifteen minutes before he reappeared, but time was still a bit stretched, as it usually is with marijuana, and I felt as if it had been close to an hour. I hadn't minded, though; I'd been watching the other people on the deck, particularly one man who was acting strangely. He was alone, and all he seemed to want to do was hold onto the

tree trunk growing through the floorboards. He had both arms around it, and from the look on his very pale face, I knew what he was going through.

*Looks like the black cigar got him, too, poor guy.*

Under normal circumstances, I would have gone over to him and tried to help in some way, but these weren't exactly normal circumstances, and my body had no intention of moving out of the chair until it had to.

*How am I feeling? Body recovering. Irritability fading. Why was I feeling that way, instead of being relieved and grateful when Shura got me out? Aaaah, of course! Loss of power, total helplessness; the recipe for resentment and anger. My emotions are still a bit flat, right now. So that explains the irritability; it was all I could feel of the anger underneath. Maybe I'll feel real anger later; I'm pretty sure I'll feel anger later.*

When Shura returned, he wasn't smiling. He didn't even make an effort to smile. I looked up and asked him if he was okay, and all he said was, "Let's get out of here."

I followed him into the house and through the crowded living room. We made no effort to find our hosts to say goodbye, on our way to the front door.

We climbed the hill to the parked car, slowly and in silence.

*Whatever happened to him must have been pretty bad, but he obviously doesn't want to talk right now, so I'll stay quiet.*

Shura backed the car out of the parking space very carefully, with several false starts and squeals of brake. Finally, we were on the narrow road, driving a bit faster than I thought wise. I was about to make a gentle suggestion that he slow down a bit, when he began to do just that. I breathed deeply and tried to relax.

After a few minutes, he said to me, "Could you watch — watch the road behind us? I can't look in the — the mirror, the rear — the rear-view mirror. I lose track of — uh — the — uh — where I'm going. Can't look in the mirror."

(He explained to me later that what he saw in the rear-view mirror became confused with the road ahead of him, that he couldn't tell which direction was which.)

"Oh, boy!" I muttered, then reassured him, "Don't worry, I'll turn around and keep my eyes on the road in back, so leave that part to me, and you can concentrate on what's in front."

*Boy-oh-boy-oh-boy! We should have stayed at the house until he was all right. Not too smart, driving when he's like this. Hope our guardian angels are on the job.*

I turned around in my seat so I could see through the rear window of the car, prepared to tell him whenever another car approached, but for some reason no one else was sharing our road at that particular time, so we



didn't have to deal with traffic.

After about ten of the longest minutes in human history, Shura pulled to the side of the road and parked. I looked around. To our right I could see only trees, but across the road was a little outdoor cafe.

Shura said, "Let's go get ourselves a cup of coffee or something, okay?"

I smiled at him, "Sure. Looks like a nice place. I hope you want to sit outside."

"Yeah. Outside is fine with me."

*His voice is still a bit flat.*

We sat down at a table in the patio. There were no other customers in sight. Shura took my right hand, squeezed it gently, then let go. A stout man in a stained white apron appeared, carrying a small pad. When we both ordered coffee, he set his lips disapprovingly, but Shura repeated that all we wanted, for the moment, was coffee.

"I'd like to make him happy," said Shura, when the man had disappeared through the cafe door, "But I can't bear the thought of food, for the moment."

"Me, neither," I said, having already tested out images of sandwiches in my mind without noting any enthusiasm.

There was a moment's silence, and I openly searched his face, which was still set and grim, finally deciding it was time to try my first question.

"What happened to you?"

"Well, I was feeling pretty pleased with myself for having gotten you out of your bad place, and not being really much affected personally, then I sat in that damned hammock," he said, finally letting a small smile happen, "And — well — I suppose it was probably the swinging motion, just that bit of rocking back and forth; it wasn't much, but it was enough, and suddenly I knew I was about to vomit, and right on top of that, I had the sensation that — well, I figured I was going to let go at the other end, too, so I headed for the bathroom as fast as I could. Got there barely in time. Both ends exploded. Had to do some mopping up in that bathroom; it was a mess. That's what took me so long."

"How are you feeling now?"

He looked intently at my eyes and ground the words out, "I'm furious. Angry, angry. Mostly at myself, for having broken my own rule."

"Which is?"

"I think I mentioned it before. It goes: never take anyone else's drug in anyone else's house. And I broke it. And got slapped. What a damned fool I was!"

The grumpy man in the apron appeared with our coffees, and

waited stolidly while Shura got out his billfold and paid.

When we were alone again, we talked. We speculated on what might have been in the fat black cigar besides marijuana; the guesses ranged from PCP to exotic-sounding plants I had never heard of. Shura even expressed some doubt as to whether there had been any marijuana in it at all.

We drank from our cups and a small silence fell. I looked inward and concluded that I was experiencing a mixture of two states: pleasure at being with Shura, sharing a difficult experience, and on the other hand — a quietly growing awareness of my own outrage at what had happened.

*Well, if it WAS marijuana, then this will be the third time I've taken it and ended up being angry. Interesting.*

Shura hit his forehead and muttered, "Why didn't I pay attention to the nickname of that cigar!"

I heard myself actually laughing for the first time since the troubles on the deck. I had forgotten about that particular example of Truth in Advertising.

Shura looked at me and managed a wry smile.

Gradually, the conversation became broader and a bit less intense, as Shura found his way into reminiscences about previous near-death drug experiences, as he called them, and I discovered myself laughing again. We ordered more coffee. Finally, we examined each other's faces and eyes, and asked each other one more time, "How are you feeling now?" and decided we were back to baseline. Close enough, anyway, for the long drive north to San Francisco.

We saw lolanthe. At least, everyone said we saw lolanthe. I have never been able to remember a single moment of that performance. Total amnesia. Well, not really total. There is a faint impression of a blonde woman in pink, and a glitter of sequins. But that's all.

It was a very long time before we told Aaron and Grace what had happened that day, and why we both left so hurriedly. When we asked them, point-blank, if they knew what had been in that fat black cigar, they assured us that their friend had told them it contained nothing but a powerful African marijuana. Only one other guest, they said, reported having trouble with it (at which I nodded, remembering the man with his arms wrapped around the tree), and they were very sorry we'd had such a miserable experience.

We assured them we didn't hold them responsible, and Shura said, "Hey, no harm was done, my friends, and we both learned a valuable lesson, namely, pay attention to nick-names!"

The fourth and last time I tried marijuana finally gave me something of great value. It was many years after the Dred and, again, with

Shura. A friend had given us what were, at that time, called Alice B. Toklas brownies, named after the friend and lover of the writer, Gertrude Stein. Ms. Toklas' marijuana brownies were famous. Neither of us had tried them before, and we told each other one Saturday evening that we owed ourselves one try of marijuana in this form, just to find out if there was any appreciable difference in its effects, compared with the smoke.

I had my bath, then Shura took a shower, and we met in the dining room in our dressing gowns. The two small brownies sat on a blue plate on the table. We looked down at the plate, we looked at each other, then Shura chuckled and I broke into frank laughter.

"Oh, boy!" I said, "Are we wary? Are we apprehensive? Are we chicken? Noooo. Not us, we aren't!"

"Well," Shura protested, "Do keep in mind that one of the measures of intelligence is supposed to be the ability to learn from experience, n'est pas?"

"Yes, indeedy, thy point is well made. But we've never tried this particular form of the stuff, have we? And as researchers, how can we express opinions on that which we tasteth not, et cetera, et cetera. Right?"

In reply, Shura picked up one of the innocent looking fudge squares, and handed it to me. He took the remaining one in his fingers and we touched brownies, as we would ordinarily have clinked glasses.

Waiting for the first signs of effects, we went to the bedroom and turned on the radio. Shura searched among our three available classical music stations until he found music we liked; a passionate piano concerto by Brahms. We lay back on the pillows and held hands.

When — about half an hour later — the experience began to blossom, I was aware of it mostly as a stretching of time, a slowing down of everything — thought, motion, the flow of life itself — which was certainly familiar enough. It wasn't any friendlier than before; there was again the push, the surge of sensation that made me uneasy, but I was reassured by Shura's presence and touch.

"How ya doin', buns?" asked my friend and lover.

"It's pretty strong, but I'm okay."

"Yeah, it does kind of come right at you, doesn't it."

"You all right?" I asked him, rolling over to nestle on his shoulder.

"I'm fine," he said, "But it still isn't my drug of choice."

After a while, I felt the pressure of a full bladder, and told Shura I would have to leave him for a moment. He got up with me and followed as I wobbled my way down the hall, through the dining room and kitchen, and into the bathroom. I called to him through the closed door, "I think that journey took about five days, give or take a week."

There was a brief silence beyond the door, then Shura said, "Hey,

do you want to do an experiment?"

"Sure," I said, "What do you have in mind?"

"Wait a moment; I'm going to get a watch. Stay where you are, okay?"

"All right," I replied, "Don't take more than a month getting back to me."

I remember looking at myself in the mirror, combing my hair for what seemed like hours, then Shura's voice through the door, "Hey, still in there?"

"Uh-huh," I drawled, "I think so."

*I haven't the slightest idea whether I'm making sense or not, and it doesn't matter, because he hasn't the slightest idea either.*

The door opened and a mass of electrified silver hair, with Shura's bearded face beaming under it, poked itself into my field of vision.

"Hello!" I said, putting down the comb.

"Are you ready for some scientific research?"

"Absolutely! What do you want me to do?"

"I'm going to go back out and close the door, and I'll say 'Start,' and you keep doing whatever you're doing, then when I say 'Stop,' you tell me how many minutes you think have gone by since the 'Start.' Got it?"

The words crawled through my mind, occasionally taking a wrong turn or two through labyrinthian caverns, but eventually, I thought I understood what he'd said.

"All right," I nodded, "Go to it."

I turned to the mirror again and heard the word "Start," reverberating through the closed door. I looked at the eyes in the mirror and remembered being told that one should be careful, while under the influence of any psychedelic, not to look too long at reflected eyes, because it was easy to become hypnotized.

*What would happen if I got hypnotized? Would I stand here for hour sand hours, my mind lost in hyperspace, or would it be like a state of sleep? I really should try it sometime, as long as Shura's around to rescue me.*

Images swam through my mind, and I sat down to pursue them. Planets, rivers, blackbirds cawing in dark woods —

*Ah, yes, that's England, the sound of those birds everywhere in the countryside.*

I remembered. Getting out of the downy bed, at the Bell Inn, the only place to stay in the village of Charlbury, my first morning in England, with Shura — all those years ago — going out onto the little porch and seeing the vegetable garden down below, and the stone wall and, across the fields, a wood full of loud blackbirds; standing there, watching the last of the morning mist curling around little cabbages, half expecting Peter Rabbit to

trot into view any moment, wearing his blue jacket with the brass buttons. It was England as I'd imagined it all my life, a watercolor painted by Beatrix Potter, and all the bone-deep exhaustion of the previous day's travels was forgotten. Suddenly, I heard Shura's muffled voice, "Stop!"

I opened the door.

"How long do you think it's been since I gave you 'Start'?"

I thought back, reviewing my movements from here to there, my thoughts and memories, and I said, "I would say at least twenty minutes."

Shura was obviously pleased. "That's a time-stretch of four to one! Pretty impressive!"

I poked his chest, "Well, fine, but how long was it really? You haven't told me!"

"Oh, sorry. It was all of five minutes."

"That's impossible!"

"Nope. Five minutes exactly," he grinned, waving a wristwatch.

"Boy," I muttered, "That's really hard to believe. Five minutes!"

The push of the unwelcome sensation that marijuana always imposed on me was less present, now. I could ignore it most of the time.

*Getting used to it. But it still isn't my ally, as Shura would say. No, not my ally.*

I was about to turn on heat under a pot of soup when Shura said, "Come here a minute, babe."

I turned to see him standing about a foot from the sink, looking at the large electric clock on the wall above the faucets. He motioned to me, so I joined him and put an arm around his waist. He whispered, "Look at the second hand."

"Okay, I'm looking," I said, not whispering.

"Notice anything?"

I watched the second hand and realized that it was moving very slowly, ridiculously slowly. I said so to Shura.

"Let's both concentrate on it," he said, "And see how much more slowing we can get."

We were focusing tightly on the second hand, willing it to hold back, slow down, when a surprising thing, a magically strange thing, happened. We both saw it at the same time: a curtain of translucent beads, threaded on lines of energy, between us and the clock face. The energy-curtain didn't block our view; we could see our second hand with absolute clarity, but I knew — *I knew* — that, in reaching through the curtain with our will, we were moving our entire selves — at least, mind and spirit — closer to going through the shimmering beads, into a very different place, a reality I couldn't conceive of.

This time it was I who whispered, "You see the curtain, too, don't you?"

"Of course I see it," he replied, almost impatiently.

The second hand was almost still. Almost unmoving. I was holding my breath, knowing that it was about to stop, when Shura broke the spell, loudly, "That's it! Now we know we can do it, we don't have to actually go all the way, right?"

"What are you *talking* about!" I asked, astonished, "Why did you pull back?"

There was something in his face, a look I couldn't decipher; at least, not until he said to me, "I don't like to admit it, but I suddenly got scared."

"Of what, honey?"

"Well, let me ask you this: what do you think happens when the second hand stops moving?"

I didn't have to think out the answer, "It probably means time has stopped."

"Exactly. And what happens to you and me when we find ourselves in a place where there is no time?"

I was beginning to understand, "We might get stuck and not be able to find our way out."

"See, once you're in a place with no time, no sequence of events, how can you even formulate the intent to get out?"

"Well, I must admit that the territory on the other side of the curtain did have a strange — ah — feel to it. Maybe next time, we'll have somebody babysit us; of course, I don't know what a third person could actually do, when you come down to it."

"I don't either." said Shura, then stooped to kiss me, "Do you forgive me, please?"

"Don't be silly, sweetheart; nothing to forgive. It's even possible you saved us both from a fate worse than — ," and it suddenly hit me, forcefully, that there really are fates worse than death, and that finding yourself trapped in timelessness might well be one of them.

On the way back to our bedroom nest, I told him that one of the most fascinating things about this experiment was the appearance of the energy curtain, because it was identical to the curtain I had told him about seeing on my life-changing peyote day, twenty-odd years ago, in the Natural Science Museum with Sam Golding.

"Remember I told you about the time when we walked into the dioramas, where there was nothing living — it was all steel and marble and glass — and after just a moment or two, I began coming down, do you remember?"

"Uh-huh, yes, I remember," said my man, "You said you saw a curtain —"

"It was exactly like this one tonight, only bigger, and it separated the two worlds, the one I had been in since eating the peyote, and the ordinary world I was falling back into. Same curtain, honey. I wonder what it is?"

Shura pulled me onto the bed, "Oh, it's probably just an ordinary worlds-separator curtain, kid; nothing to fuss about. They're a dime a dozen, where I come from. Now, how about taking off all that unnecessary clothing, hmm?"

*How wonderful, to end up with laughter instead of anger. It's the first time THAT'S happened, with pot. Maybe we should quit, while we're ahead. Find other ways to experience time-warping.*

And so, indeed, it came to pass. Clearly, marijuana was simply not our cup of tea, and we never took it again.

## CHAPTER 4. THE BRAZIL CAPER

(Alice's voice)

In the mid 1980's, somewhere around the month of April, Shura received a phone call from a gentleman who introduced himself as Senhor Giorgio Paros, a businessman from Brazil. He said, "I am here in the Bay Area to consult with an American company, and also to see you, Doctor Shura, on a very important matter."

Shura replied, "Well, Senhor — excuse me, could you repeat your name?"

The man gave his last name again and added, "Please call me Senhor Giorgio, Sir. In Brazil, we do not use last names very much. I would like also to bring with me a very good friend, Doctor Hector, the former Assistant Secretary of Housing and Transportation of Brazil, if that would be acceptable?"

Shura told me later, "He obviously didn't want to go into details on the phone, so I thought, what the heck, maybe you wouldn't mind making a few sandwiches for lunch tomorrow, and I invited them over. Is that okay with you?"

I laughed, "Sure. It sounds pretty intriguing, with a former — what was it? — assistant minister of something for Brazil, right?"

"Yeah," said Shura, "Transportation, I think he said. Sounds as if it might be interesting. And if it turns out to be a total dud, it'll only have cost us a couple of hours and a bit of lunch."

*Well, it's hard not to be impressed by a minister of anything of any country, when you get down to it. Of course, this one's a Former, which isn't as good as a Presently, and he was only an Assistant, not the Main Man, but so what! Former Assistant Minister of anything coming to lunch is still pretty good, if you're an ordinary run-of-the-mill social climber. Besides, it should make a good dining-out story, if nothing else.*

The next day, shortly after noon, the Boys from Brazil arrived with a bunch of flowers for the hostess, both of them carrying serious briefcases.



The businessman, Giorgio, was a big, burly character who looked like an aging stormtrooper, with thinning hair and pale blue, penetrating eyes.

We sat down on the patio and talked, exchanging the necessary pieces of basic information. Sr. Giorgio, it turned out, had long been a major player in Brazilian radio as the owner of several stations, and was now moving into television. Despite the faintly threatening first impression, particularly when he scowled over some remembered annoyance, Giorgio gradually emerged as something of a pussycat, a bit sentimental and rather romantic in a way peculiar to Brazilians (as we were to discover later).

Giorgio's friend, Dr. Hector, was a small-boned man in his late sixties who seemed, at first, rather quiet for a politician; a bit self-effacing, in fact. But as the afternoon wore on, as we all became increasingly familiar with each other's faces and voices, Dr. Hector relaxed and smiled more often, and we began to understand his peculiar charm, the mixture of sincerity — sometimes approaching intensity — and humor which must have served him well in his government post.

But that's getting ahead of my tale. Back to the first few minutes of the meeting.

As I carried out plates of sandwiches to the patio, Giorgio was saying, "Even in the banks, they list customers under their first names! Yes, believe it, this is so!"

I didn't have to look at Shura to know what the expression on his face was: polite skepticism, mixed with frank amusement.

*I can't believe that, either. Must be a bit of exaggeration somewhere. But it does make a great Third World anecdote!*

I brought out a large pitcher of iced tea and some bottles of Calistoga water, then sat down and prepared to listen.

As background to their not-yet-specified proposition, Giorgio told us a story. It seems that, several years earlier, an American gentleman we will call Borch, who had relocated to Rio de Janeiro, and who could not fully explain to anyone's satisfaction why he was unable to return to the United States, married a wealthy Brazilian lady, and produced a couple of children. Then he moved his entire family to an island in the Caribbean whose authorities were notoriously friendly and accommodating towards foreigners with money, and within a few months, all his upper class acquaintances in Rio had received invitations to a new health spa. The brochure emphasized a kind of therapy not usually offered by spas: psychological, with emphasis on the resolving of marital discord and problems like alcoholism.

The Brazilians poured into the new spa. Every Wednesday, the owner, Mr. Borch, would bring out two vials from his private refrigerator. The fluid in the first vial was red; that in the second, yellow. Each client was

given a carefully measured amount from one or the other of the vials, served in a beautifully designed miniature goblet, a small crystal bowl cradled in a network of pewter. Borch referred to the medicine as The Essence, and refused to further identify it.

The effect of the Essence medicine was astonishing, Georgio told us. "You had a feeling that God had entered your soul, and all was peace inside you," he said, "If you looked at somebody, you felt love for him, compassion, you understand? For married couples, it was miraculous. All the emotions — yes? — the feelings they had in the past for each other; all these returned, just like the day of their marriage."

Shura and I listened to the account in fascinated silence, but both of us were beginning to feel the pressure of questions needing to be asked, and I actually had my mouth open to say something, when Dr. Hector spoke up for the first time since the story began, and stunned us back into listening.

"Once, when I had expressed myself to Mr. Borch again," the grey-suited little gentleman said, "About wishing to know what was in the Essence, he told me that I could have faith in its value and its purity, because it had been created by one of the world's most respected scientists, a chemist called Alexander Borodin, and that it was not necessary for me to know anything else."

"Oh, my God!" I breathed, then laughed.

Shura protested, "I've never heard of anyone named Borch, and I certainly never supplied him with any drug!"

Georgio gestured impatiently, "Yes, yes, Hector and I decided this ourselves — that you had nothing to do with it — when we investigated and found out who you were."

*I wonder if he uses the word, "investigated," the same way we would use it. Sort of implies private detectives and all that sort of thing. Maybe better not to know.*

One burning question had arisen in my mind, and I decided now was the time to get an answer, before the conversation got any more complicated. I leaned forward in my chair and asked, looking from one to the other, "How much did these clients pay for the miraculous spa treatment, if you don't mind my curiosity?"

"Most of us paid twenty-five thousand dollars per week," said Georgio.

Shura and I looked at each other, eyes wide.

"Oog," I said, brilliantly.

"Sounds like a pretty good scam," said Shura, nodding his appreciation.

"In the last week at the spa," said Hector, "Georgio and I managed to divert some of our Essence medicine, and we took the sample with us

when we left. We had it analyzed in the United States. It was a drug called MDMA."

"Oh, boy," I said.

Shura just grunted.

Giorgio leaned forward, and I saw how the expensive suit pulled under his arms. I said, "Why don't you gentlemen take off your jackets; it's too warm to be formal."

They both smiled and followed my suggestion.

Sr. Giorgio leaned forward again, his elbows on the white patio table. He was wearing dark red garters around his shirtsleeves. His hands met each other in prayer position at the tip of his nose as he paused, obviously reviewing what was to come next.

Shura and I waited, respectfully. Dr. Hector sat back in his chair, eyes closed in the soft sunlight, apparently content to have his friend do the talking, for the moment.

Finally, Giorgio opened up Stage Two. "The reason we are here, Doctor Shura," he said, speaking slowly, "Is that we do not wish to go back to the Borch spa, for many reasons."

*Twenty-five thousand a week would be reason enough for me.*

Shura nodded.

"But we — all of my friends who have been there — believe that this medicine, this Essence — the MDMA — is of great value. We have a plan to open a clinic in Rio, where we live, and teach people to administer it to patients, yes?"

Shura shifted in his chair.

"We would like to do research," continued Giorgio, "And establish this medicine as a respected way to solve many problems for people who have pain in their souls. Do you understand?"

*He's hitting all the right buttons, so far.*

Shura said, "Do you have permission from the authorities in Brazil to do this?"

Dr. Hector spoke up, "Yes, we are working on that now. I have a good friend who has access to the President, and it will be only a matter of time."

Shura asked another blunt one, "What is the legal status of MDMA in Brazil?"

Giorgio looked over at Dr. Hector, then answered, "At the present time, it is not named in any of our laws. It is legal."

"You mean," said Shura, smiling gently, "It is not *illegal*, am I right?"

The light blue eyes squinted, then the big man laughed, "Yes, I suppose that is true. We hope to sanctify the use of this medicine by

employing it in our clinic. Does this make sense to you?"

*Sanctify?* Wow.

"It sounds very interesting," replied Shura, cautiously. He paused for a moment, then asked, "And how can I be of help to you?"

"We would like," said Giorgio, glancing at Dr. Hector, who nodded, "To invite you — and your wife, of course — to come down to Rio and meet our friends, and talk to a group of doctors and psychiatrists about this medicine, and how it can be used. And we would like you to make a supply of MDMA for us, for our clinic, so that we can begin the good work."

"I would be most happy to do so," said Shura, courteously, even a bit formally, "As long as you can assure me that I will not be breaking any of the laws of Brazil. I have to have absolute certainty about that. At present, MDMA is not illegal in the United States, but I don't know anything about Brazilian drug law, and I cannot be put in the position of doing anything in a foreign country which is even slightly questionable, as I'm sure you understand."

"Absolutely!" declared Giorgio, while Dr. Hector murmured, "Of course, of course."

"By the time you get to Rio, my dear friend," assured Giorgio, "We will have copies of all Brazilian law that has relation to this project. But I can promise you already that you will not be breaking any laws of our country. We would not ask you to do such a thing. You are a great man, a great scientist, and we have deep respect for you, for your reputation. Be assured, all will be legal and honorable."

So we agreed to go to Rio de Janeiro.

When the airline tickets arrived in the mail, they were for mid-June, on Pan American, in first class for the first leg of the journey, and business class for the second. The return trip tickets were included in the package, for a date two weeks later, also Pan American, again first and business class.

"Oh, my God, Honey," I breathed, "*First class!* I've never flown first class in my life, have you?"

"Nope," said The Great Scientist, "And I don't expect to again, to tell the truth. Should be an interesting experience."

"*Interesting?*" I gasped, "You bet yore sweet bippy, it's gonna be interesting!" I got up and went around in back of him, and planted a loud, smoochy kiss on his neck. He kept his dignity, as usual, barely glancing up as I did a modified Bossa Nova past him, through the kitchen and into the hall.

FRIDAY                      Rio de Janeiro, Brazil                      10 p.m.

"It seems only wise to begin making notes now, considering the amount of activity that might continue for the rest of our stay. If today —

our first day here — is any indication, we are going to be inundated by people, energy, questions, enthusiasms, happy noise, food, sightseeing, and maybe even some chemistry."

The entire trip had been as comfortable and smooth as a long journey by air could possibly be. We had been in first class from San Francisco to Miami, a new experience, since each of us had always before traveled as a peasant among peasants. Both leg room and food are worlds better in first class. They gave us a menu from which to choose our main course (in this case for breakfast) and what we got was an omelet with an exquisite filet mignon and potatoes, along with fresh fruit, yeasty rolls, coffee and a choice of liquors and wines. I did a small double-take at the alcohol on the menu, right up there with eggs and strawberry jam.

*I wonder why they offer alcohol with breakfast; maybe a lot of people who fly first class are alcoholics; successful, driven people who can't relax unless they drink? And the airline wants those kinds of customers to feel that it's okay to order wine early in the day without being embarrassed or defensive?*

In Miami, we faced a seven-hour layover, which we spent in utter comfort in a room reserved for us at the Miami International Airport Hotel, where we fooled around on the fresh sheets as the air conditioning hummed away. All the hotel reservations, as well as the airline tickets, had been arranged and paid for by our Brazilian hosts. By the time our Pan Am flight to Rio was ready for boarding, we were refreshed, cleaned up and minimally tired.

All we knew about our next plane, Pam Am flight 441, was that we would be in something called Clipper Class. Turned out to be their term for what other airlines usually call business class, between first and peasant. We had never before flown *that*, either.

The leg room was still good, and the food only slightly less impressive than first, and we were perfectly content. My faith in Pan Am was, at that point, absolute.

Finally, we landed in Rio de Janeiro. The first proof of our hosts' influence and importance was in the way we went through immigration and customs. Dr. Hector met us coming off the plane and introduced us to two young men who apparently worked for the airport; one spoke good English, the other no English at all. While one of them stayed with us, obliging Shura's desire for a lesson in Portuguese (I was watching the carousel for our suitcases), the other went off with our passports and visas (Shura told me later that he felt a stab of panic as our vital papers disappeared in the hands of a stranger). Within a few minutes, the gentleman returned with our papers in order, properly stamped.

"Thus is the path smoothed for the Great One," I intoned, making a token curtsy, "And the Great One's humble and adoring wife."

"It certainly beats waiting in line," grinned Shura.

When the bags had been retrieved, we were shepherded past a line of waiting people and through an electronic gateway with a sign that said: "If you don't have anything to declare, push the green button and go through," which we did. At that point, we were apparently finished with any official procedures and free to leave the airport. I whispered to Shura, "Sort of like the King and Queen of California, yes?"

One could not help being impressed.

Once out of the Rio airport, in an area where cars picked up passengers, we saw Sr. Giorgio and his lovely wife, Lena, of whom he had spoken with some pride, and Dr. Hector's wife, Rita, who was equally attractive.

I wrote: "Both women are in their forties or maybe fifties, but the eyelids and dewlaps have been expertly taken care of by one or another of Rio's famous plastic surgeons. As we were to discover, it isn't considered something to be kept secret here, if you've had the signs of aging smoothed out; women boast about 'their' plastic surgeon, who is always the best and owns three homes in at least two countries to prove it."

There was an immediate sense of being welcomed without reservations, with none of the cool surveying, the critical inspection underneath the polite smiles, that would be expected from upper-class women in North America, meeting you for the first time. That isn't to say the inspection wasn't going on; after all, we look, we evaluate, we do a lot of comparing the first time we meet a stranger, no matter who we are or in what country. It's just that the instinct to make the new person welcome seemed uppermost at that moment, and the watchfulness less obvious.

We got into Giorgio and Lena's big American car, since it was their house (the "summer house") we were to stay in. Within a few minutes, I found myself regretting that I'd packed the camera in the back of the car; we were driving past the favelas — the shacks of the poor — climbing steeply up the hillsides. Red, blue, green, yellow, black and pink shacks, the paint scuffed and peeling. It was apparent that, in a reversal of what one finds in most countries, the Brazilian poor have the hills and the rich have the flatlands.

The famed Rio hills are quite extraordinary; they are like very large versions of the sharply up and down hills of China. Sugar Loaf is a massive, round-topped rock, a great solid piece, scored deeply on its sides as if it had risen in one huge, screaming up-thrust from the depths of the earth, eons ago.

Our car drove along the beautiful beachfront sidewalk familiar from photographs, with its lovely tilework in wave patterns, stretching as far as we could see.

Lena turned to me and said, regretfully, "You cannot go into the

water. It is so pretty, but you cannot swim."

We asked why.

"It is poisoned," said Giorgio, "Because there are no sewers in the favelas, you understand? So the — everything — comes down the hills, and it all goes into the bay."

Shura was in the front passenger seat, but I knew we must be thinking pretty much the same thing.

*Jesus! That's what's meant by Third World. Instead of building sewers for the poor on the hill, they let the sewerage flow into their bay and ruin it, then they shrug and say what a pity it is, what a shame, as if it were all an act of God.*

I realized suddenly that I was extremely tired from the long trip, and would have to pay attention to what I said out loud, and the tone in which I said it.

*Keep your irritables to yourself, kid.*

There was a remark made by Giorgio, somewhere during the ride — perhaps while we were passing the clustered favelas up on the hillsides — about democracy being a fine idea, but it wasn't working here in Brazil; that things had been better controlled when the military was in power (although he added, perhaps out of courtesy to his guests, that he didn't feel comfortable with the idea of a military government). I think this was said just after he mentioned that the inflation rate was now one per cent every day.

The attitude expressed, during that car ride and afterwards, toward the people who live in the favelas was pretty much the same attitude to be found in every city when the rich are talking about the poor: resentment overlying anxiety and a certain chronic sense of guilt. It is a subject that outsiders are well advised to stay away from in any country, but especially in a place like Brazil, where there is not a large middle class, where there are, for the most part, only the very rich and the extremely poor.

On the beachfront, we passed huge hotels with carefully tended tropical gardens in front. Graffiti were everywhere, even on second and third stories of some of the tall buildings; many were faced with marble and all looked expensive. There were palm trees, fig trees, and one could glimpse carefully maintained miniature gardens between the hotels. Yet, despite the luxuriousness of this rich peoples' playground, I was aware of something typical of the tropics: an impression that decay was just around the corner, that if those in charge of maintenance failed for a week or two to make sure things were polished and cleaned, there would be a fast deterioration of surfaces, a growth of fungus in the crevices, grey-brown dust everywhere. It could have been an effect of the overcast sky, this sense-impression; perhaps it was the result of too few hours of sleep.

It was now winter in Brazil, which meant daytime temperatures in

the 70's, for the most part, although sometimes it slipped into the low 80's. (We eventually got used to the Brazilians apologizing for the cold weather.)

What our hosts called the summer house had been built by Giorgio (he said) for Lena, and he complained during the drive there that, once it was built, she decided she didn't want to live in it, preferring their downtown apartment.

Lena looked over at me (we were in the back seat) and grinned. Giorgio's voice had conveyed a distinct touch of indulgence along with the exasperation, and I thought about Brazil being a man's world, and the subtle power games that go on between male and female in a patriarchal, machismo society.

It became clear, as the conversation continued, that the new place actually was used, despite Giorgio's complaints. They entertained there, because it had more room than their old apartment, and when friends from out of town came to stay, everybody moved into the summer house. The neighborhood was one of Rio's finest and most expensive, with brand new houses going up in every block. There was a watchman at the entrance gate and he was in charge of a movable crossing barrier, and there were speed bumps staggered on the pavement to insure that "unauthorized" vehicles would have a very tough time getting through. Authorized cars didn't exactly speed along, either.

Giorgio told us a story about life in the enclaves of the rich. He said, "Six months ago, we began to have many burglaries here, one house after another. Whenever the people would leave to go back to their apartments in the city, their house would become a victim. We were broken into, also. Finally, it was discovered that the watchman at the entrance gate was telling his friends which houses were empty, and they would come in at night and take everything. They could take their time, without fear, because the watchman always knew when the owners would return. That is part of his job, you see, to know which houses are empty, without servants, so he can keep his eye on them and protect them from thieves!"

We laughed, and Shura asked if the present watchman had been put through a very complete inspection before being hired.

"You bet," chuckled Giorgio, "He was investigated like he was taking a position in a bank vault. He is so clean, he has a halo over his head!" His booming laughter filled the car. Then we pulled into a driveway and parked.

The house was five stories (if you counted the little outlook on the top as a story), built of concrete and wood. Not particularly pretty outside, but very attractive inside, with white plaster walls and rich brown wood. Some delicious pieces of carved furniture — I was told they were Brazilian antiques — tempted me to stroke surfaces and edges. On one wall of the



living room was a huge African ceremonial mask. Giorgio said this was in honor of his Negro blood (like many people in Brazil, and especially in Rio, he is a mixture of several races and proud of all of them). I noted some potted plants with thick trunks, their large green leaves climbing up the white walls. Big armchairs all over the room, and a long couch.

In the kitchen, we met Corazon, (which means "heart") who, Lena explained, was to be our cook, housekeeper and friend. She was a mixture of Portuguese, Italian, Negro (the Brazilians are comfortable with that word) and Amazonian Indian, and she had lived for four years in New York, so her English was very good. During our stay, she did our laundry with loving care, made the beds, cooked extraordinary meals, made constant strong Brazilian coffee for us, and interpreted the world around us when we needed to understand this very different culture.

She was also very, very pregnant.

On the second floor was our bedroom, very big, with furniture Shura finally, after some thought, identified as French moderne of the Jacques Tati era.

No facecloths anywhere. (I was to discover that facecloths are unknown in Brazil, as well as in many other countries, First as well as Third World.)

The bed had a hard mattress which Shura liked. The view from one side of the room, when we opened the sliding doors, was lovely: below us was the tree-lined cobblestoned street, and we could glimpse houses roofed in red tile on the other side of it. There were palms and mimosa trees growing in their gardens.

We slept for a couple of hours, then dressed for the first social obligation of our visit: meeting the "Family." This was what they called themselves, the group of about 35 people who took MDMA either once a week or perhaps only once a month. Giorgio explained that usually not all of them would be gathering together in the same house — eight to ten being considered the preferred maximum for the MDMA experience — but that this evening, in honor of our visit, the whole group had been invited for questions and answers and general celebration.

I wore a long, loose, white cotton dress with ruffles, comfortable and relatively graceful. Shura had already been told that ties simply were not worn in Brazil, except to the office when necessary and when meeting with VIP's of certain kinds, so he had on a sports shirt with his new dark pants.

The first lesson was in the ways of greeting. Women are welcomed in the French manner with a kiss on each cheek, kiss left then right; men shake hands with men or grip each other's arms or shoulders. Several of the guests did their best to confine themselves to the U.S. handshake, but we all

soon adopted the nicer French double-buss. (By the time we fell into bed, Shura and I had kissed more cheeks and gripped more forearms than we would have believed possible in one single evening.)

Among the guests, this first time and the following day. Sr. Draggo (the only one of the Family known by his last name) who was lightly scarred from a crash in another South American country several years before. It seems he was in a limousine which was mistaken for that of the president, by some rebels or Communists or the CIA or whoever it is that's in the business of assassinating South American presidents. All in the car were killed but Sr. Draggo. We were informed that he was an importer whose specialty was trade with China, and that he owned four little companies of various kinds, all of them in Brazil.

Sr. Leo: heavysset, with a big round face I liked immediately; humorous, sad-funny and warm. He was also in business, import-export, and spoke French, English, Arabic, Portuguese and Spanish.

His wife, Anita, was quite pretty. She wore her very blond hair in a corona around her face, a style that I finally decided was old-fashioned Parisian.

Pierre and Helena, who stayed in the house next door (on weekends) with daughter Delia and her husband Tomas. They were French. Pierre owned half a dozen stores in Sao Paulo, all of them selling fabrics to interior decorators.

Sr. Waldo, masseur. He was present the following day, giving massages upstairs in the second-floor mini living room, but we weren't sure he had taken the MDMA. We speculated to each other that he probably couldn't afford it very often. (It had gradually become clear that our hosts charged for the MDMA, although we were never told the price, and didn't ask. They had to buy it from somebody, obviously, and Shura and I thought it likely that they had made some kind of arrangement with the infamous Borch — which would probably make it very expensive, indeed.)

Sr. Waldo was a gentle, sweet man who spoke no English. I made all kinds of passionate gestures and noises about the incense he was burning during the massages, and the next day he brought me several bundles of it, as a gift, along with some herbs, including one called Guarana (pronounced with emphasis on the last "a"), an herb which interested Shura very much, being apparently some kind of stimulant.

Doctor Roberto, plastic surgeon. A Good-looking, slender, tall and compulsively seductive man who appeared to be intelligent, and struck me as being somewhat calculating. He asked some sharp and insightful questions the first evening. Supposedly one of the best in his business.

Marina: a beautiful young woman, black haired, immature and lovable, very spontaneous and expressive. She was the mistress of Dr.

Roberto and the mother of his young daughter, Katya, who was also beautiful (we met her some days later). Roberto had a wife (whom we were to meet on Wednesday night at his birthday party) and two grown sons, one of them a doctor who assisted Daddy at the plastic surgery clinic. Mistress was a member of the MDMA family; wife was not. Marina was studying art.

(All this information was fed to us — with undisguised relish — by Giorgio and Lena, late that first night, after all the guests had gone.)

There were other people whose names were never quite made clear in the general cheerful confusion. One was a heavy-set mulatto woman with short hair and an open, friendly face, whose hobby was taking Kirlian photographs. She handed round a set of them which was quite impressive, showing before and after MDMA finger-tips from various family members. The "after" revealed expansion of the glowing halo around each fingertip, and the group responded to the photos with what sounded like expressions of admiration and congratulations in Portuguese.

Oh, yes, the multi-millionaire. One hundred and twenty million or so. Looked a lot like a certain handsome Spanish-American actor, and seemed gracious, observant and self-contained. Senhor Carlos. (One *always* finds out the name of a multi-millionaire.)

Another young plastic surgeon, dressed all in white, with his wife. Open-faced, nice, good-looking, rather boyish.

And others, whose names we did hear and didn't write down, but should have, because we couldn't remember any of them by the next day.

The gathering was in honor of us. We sat like royalty, side by side, and answered questions all evening. Each guest took a turn presenting himself, his business or profession, and history of MDMA use and benefits derived therefrom. Then came the questions and discussions, with either Giorgio or Dr. Hector translating when necessary. There seemed to be a willingness, even an eagerness, to confess to emotional problems worked through, marital problems straightened out, and weight problems overcome.

A great many of the guests had been introduced to MDMA by Mr. Borch, some others by members of the Family, we gathered. Although everyone present had left the Borch operation, he was still regarded with some reverence.

Shura and I had the impression that Mr. Borch was a consummate salesman and persuader, with a very strong, charismatic personality. Despite their expressed skepticism about this gentleman, our hosts still talked about him with a touch of awe. It seemed to me that all these people had given over a lot of their power to this would-be guru, and hadn't yet taken it all back.

We were still annoyed about his unauthorized use of Shura's name

in connection with his MDMA, and had discussed the possibility of confronting him, but finally decided to forget the whole thing, because it simply wasn't worth the trouble. Besides, as Shura said at one point, "My name has probably been mis-used more times and by more con artists than I really want to know about, and I can't sue all of them. Better to let it go."

I agreed.

In any case, as Shura kept reminding me, we were well advised to be subtle about our opinions regarding Mr. Borch, since he was still an influence, even if only slightly so, among these rich and naive Brazilians. He said, "We should avoid making too many strong statements about somebody we've never met and hope never to meet."

That first evening, one of Shura's most important (and, to judge from the shocked silence, most surprising) bits of information to the group was his remark that the cost of a dose of MDMA (they used 125 milligrams, without supplement) was about a dollar. He felt it was a nice bit of data for them.

The gathering lasted many hours, with constant excited talk and the beginning of our multi-lingual experience. We found ourselves trying to communicate in every language we had between us, Shura being better at French and I at Spanish. Most of these people had some knowledge of one or both, along with their native Portuguese.

Questions about MDMA use ranged from whether there is neurological damage to humans from the drug, to why the first experience is never quite recaptured, and so on. The usual questions, in other words.

Shura's answer to the first was, "At the usual therapeutic dosage levels of between 100 and 150 milligrams per session, with or without a supplement of 40 or 50 milligrams, there is no scientific evidence that there is any neurological damage in humans. In certain laboratory animals, very high dosage levels — higher than any equivalent dose that would be given to humans — have shown damage, and in other lab animals, no damage at all."

His reply to the second question about the difficulty of recapturing the first wonderful experience was, "Nobody knows why, but it seems to be the case for most people I've talked to."

One of the guests, a man who had been identified by Lena as *a* psychiatrist, a middle-aged man with sharp, perceptive eyes in a kind face, came over toward the end of the evening and gave me that most wonderful of all compliments, telling me I was very "sympatico." My favorite word, in any language. Especially when applied to me. (We have no exact translation, but it means that you're sympathetic, empathetic, understanding and generally a nice, warm-fuzzy person.)

Then it was time to fold everything for the night, and we went

through another round of kiss-kiss, hearty back-slaps (and occasional shy hugs between men), explosive appreciations and gratitudes and all that. We had begun what I later came to think of as The Week of Constant Smiling.

#### SATURDAY:

The day of the MDMA. The people from last night's group, plus some new ones who hadn't been able to come before. Perhaps thirty five people in all, give or take. Our hosts had made clear that they needed us to "oversee" their MDMA experience, which would be very different from what they were used to, in that the entire Family would be present, instead of the usual eight or ten. Some of them were, they said later, a bit nervous about the size of the group, but relaxed into it as time passed. We were not expected to take the "medicine," but just to be present and see if anything was being done unwisely, or should be changed. We were relieved, not having wanted to take anything at all, under any circumstances, down here. (The truth is, we usually did not participate in experiences with groups of people whom we didn't know very intimately, anywhere, in any country.)

After perhaps half an hour of very Latin noise and laughter, mouths moving and hands flying, our hosts quieted everyone down and the program began. First, they were each given 75 milligrams of the red MDMA. Then the gentle mulatto woman led what she called a meditation, in the softest of sing-song Portuguese. About thirty minutes after the first half of the dose, came the second half, 50 milligrams. People talked, or sat quietly by themselves, or wandered around, just like our own research group. Shura and I were kept busy by people asking questions or telling us their life stories and innermost secrets. Just like most people taking MDMA. In four languages.

*Well, there aren't that many advantages to growing older, when you get down to it, but now and then you do find yourself enjoying a situation that wouldn't have happened when you were young and beautiful. Here we are, Shura and I, being treated like Old Wise Man and Woman, being told things, being asked for our opinions, being looked at as if we know more than anyone else, as if we can solve what no one else can solve. We are the wise elders, and best of all, we're strangers, so we get all the juiciest positive projections. It's enough to turn your head, yes it is.*

I sat and talked for some time with a young man in his late twenties, who told me he'd had a terrible alcohol problem and a lot of depression and anger, which was relieved by MDMA (his parents joined us later and confirmed his story).

The weather was muggy and the sky slightly overcast. Somebody mentioned that it was one of the many Brazilian holidays, the feast of Saint

Somebody, and we began to hear the fireworks which continued, off and on, throughout the day.

Our group dispersed relatively early, after several hours of talk with people who had wanted to share intimate thoughts, or ask advice on some deeply personal problem, or even to say thank you to us for having come. More kiss left, kiss right, hugs, more, "See you tomorrow."

In the evening, we went for a ride with our hosts to the nearest beach, where we parked, locked the car and went down onto the fine sand to pick up tiny shells and watch the old fishermen sitting with their lines in the surf, lanterns glowing beside their chairs. As the stars began to appear, Shura and I had our first view of the Southern Cross. We stood, arms around each other's waists, looking at the unfamiliar constellations and marveling at their beauty.

Back at the house, we excused ourselves and while Shura wrote upstairs in the little not-quite-finished astronomy-study with its big windows, I unpacked some of our clothes and hung them up in the bedroom closet.

Peace and quiet for a while, then Dr. Hector arrived. People do that in Rio, we were told. They just arrive, expected or not. When we heard Giorgio's booming voice calling us downstairs to "Hear the good news that Doctor Hector has for you," we obliged with eagerness only slightly tempered by tiredness.

Shura had, by now, heard from several different sources that there were going to be two labs for the making of MDMA. The original plan, to use a lab in the university, had fallen through when the university went on strike, so there had been a search for a substitute. Of course, there were politics to be considered — the Family kind — (we didn't really know what they were, only that they existed, and we'd heard hints of concerns, such as how much of the magic alchemical procedure was to be made known to this person or that, and does half of the MDMA go to the use of the Family and the other half to the future clinic?). Shura had been getting increasingly anxious to know whether he would have to split the procedure between two labs, or whether he could do it in the most convenient way: in one place at one time.

But first and foremost, as he reminded me on our way down the stairs, he wanted definite word on the legal aspects of what he was being asked to do, and Dr. Hector was the person to give him answers.

In the big living room, we went through the usual hugs and greetings before settling into armchairs. In response to Shura's direct question, Dr. Hector smiled and told him that, after intensive investigation and consultation with friends in the government, he could say without hesitation that the proposed manufacturing of MDMA, especially for

clinical use, was absolutely legal in Brazil. He added, "We will have final approval for our project in a few days, when my friend has a chance to talk to the right authorities, but that is only a formality."

Shura breathed a very audible sigh of relief, and thanked Dr. Hector for having cleared up the question of most importance to him, what he called the only remaining barrier to making MDMA for the Family and the shortly-to-be-launched clinic.

A sherbert-cool breeze was coming through the open doors, to my immense relief; I had been sweating in the earlier humid warmth, and now, finally, I was feeling comfortable.

Dr. Hector, looking even thinner than usual on the long, blue-and-green patterned couch, leaned forward and braced himself on his knees. He said to Shura, "We have decided we will use Doctor Roberto's laboratory, in his clinic where he does surgery, in the town of Niteroi. I think you will like it; it is a nice place."

Shura nodded, smiling, obviously relieved at hearing something that sounded like a plan taking shape. "It's all well and good," he'd told me earlier, "To be lionized and consulted and treated with respect and so on, but if I'm down here to make MDMA for a clinic which might actually produce some good publications, I'd like to get going."

Dr. Hector continued, "We will have our chemist, Doctor Sol — he speaks very good English — and he will bring all available equipment and basic chemicals. He can work with you and learn the procedures."

"Where does Doctor Sol usually work?" asked Shura.

"He is chief chemist at a large pharmaceutical company," said Dr. Hector, "And he is very intelligent, very *sympatico*."

"Wonderful," beamed Shura, "I look forward to getting started."

Lena brought in a large pitcher of iced tea and glasses.

The discussion was now about the future clinic, and Shura was telling our three friends that he had brought with him some 2C-B, just enough for our hosts and wives to try, at least for now, and we talked about the use of 2C-B in psychotherapy. This time I joined in, because I was the only one who had actually used it with patients.

After mentioning the most practical aspect of 2C-B, its relative shortness, I explained that not as many patients would be able to benefit from 2C-B as from MDMA, "Because MDMA is not a true psychedelic, as you probably know. It opens the soul, or the psyche, to parts of itself that are not usually accessible —"

I paused for some iced tea, and to glance at the faces around me; no one looked particularly bored, so I continued.

"— and it allows for a dropping of fear, the fear of seeing something terrible inside yourself, so there can be a lot of insight work done. 2C-B, on

the other hand, opens up a great deal more than that; it's a true psychedelic. I like to say that while MDMA opens up the mind and the heart, 2C-B opens up the gut, so to speak, the strong emotions, the great psychic energies, the unconscious images — what they call archetypes — and I really think that a patient should have worked with MDMA and intensive psychotherapy for at least six months before you begin thinking about introducing them to the different and deeper world of 2C-B."

*Was that understandable to people who don't speak English all that much? I've got to watch the words I use here, try to be clear to everyone.*

Suddenly, we were interrupted by the sound of loud firecrackers, very close by, and I remembered somebody telling us earlier that today was a saint's birthday. We trooped upstairs to the second floor and out onto a balcony, to see a fireworks display from a back yard two houses away, where they were having a big barbecue party with traditional miniature flags strung above the lawn.

No safe and sane firecrackers, these, but great whooshes of fire, thumping and crackling to make crazy the ears. Several pieces of flaming something fell back onto the tops of trees growing in the party yard and stayed there, burning happily away, while we speculated as to how much of the neighborhood was going to go up in smoke. Corazon, who had come onto the balcony behind us to see the sight, remarked that whatever parts of the tree had been burned would probably all grow back in a couple of days. (As it turned out, the next day there was no sign of tree damage at all.)

Lena pointed at balloons being sent up into the sky, and said, "You see there, they have tied paper sacks onto the balloons, and inside the sacks there are lighted candles, and they will wander all over the countryside like flying stars!"

*And set pretty little fires wherever they happen to come down.*

Shura chuckled, probably only half believing her, then asked, "Isn't that rather dangerous? I mean, what if they land on somebody's roof, or in a forest?"

Giorgio laughed, "Yes, yes, it is very dangerous, and every year there are fires, but nobody wants to stop the beautiful balloons, so what can you do?"

I could feel the Brazilian shrugs all around me, in the dark.

Finally, concluding that the neighborhood was going to stay intact, we all hugged and kissed goodnight and went to bed.

SUNDAY:

I wrote: "Warmer, maybe early 80's in mid-morning. What I could remember of my dreams last night had a negative, slightly anxious tinge, as



if the unconscious had been working overtime, trying to deal with undercurrents of doubt about this whole situation, as well as the constant need to interpret different languages, and fear of making social boo-boos."

We had breakfast with our hosts; there was a large plate of fruit of all kinds (I had read that in Brazil fresh fruit is eaten — usually — only for breakfast, but we were told that this just isn't so; it's used all the time in every kind of dish). There were pieces of pineapple, mango, papaya, some pear-oranges (there are many kinds of oranges here as well as ten varieties of bananas) and grapes. Coarse wheat bread, fine wheat bread, a kind of cinnamon roll bread and superb Provolone cheese. Corazon cooked excellent scrambled eggs with bacon. And there was plenty of the strong, addictive Brazilian coffee, which most people here took with a lot of sugar.

This was to be our sightseeing day. Despite Lena's worry about the probability that there would be too many tourists on Sugar Loaf, it was in the program, and Giorgio wanted to stick to it. (As it turned out, it was just as well he did, because the next day — and the next, and the next — we had rain.)

We reached the entrance to the Sugar Loaf ticket place, and when Giorgio parked his car and paid the car-person, he left his windshield wipers sticking up and out. This is the way, he explained, to indicate that one has already paid for parking.

We got into a gondola car running on cables, windows all around, which left us on top of an intermediate mountain, Urca. Somehow, Shura and I failed to understand from our friends that this was not the top of Sugar Loaf; just one of those small glitches in communication. We posed for each other's photos while a small mariachi band, dressed in dowdy Disneyland costumes (big mice and other strange animals) played what Shura described as "Execrable music, a Junior High School band before it knows which end of the instrument is up." Then we heard shouts from Giorgio, who waved us along and explained that we were only half way to Sugar Loaf. Oh. We hurried along to the next gondola car, amused at the pathway, which had been carefully set through the middle of the ultimate in souvenir tourist-traps, numerous little booths hawking everything from miniature flags to exercise videos.

On to Sugar Loaf. The top of the mountain, when we finally disembarked, revealed a view which must be absolutely unrivaled in the world. You couldn't possibly have a more fantastic bay. Its fame is totally justified. We just stood there, like all the other gawking tourists, and tried to take it all in. Giorgio and Lena watched us fondly, as we oohed and aahed and pointed and gaped in astonishment.

Back to the city and lunch at Porxo, (pronounced somewhat like Porshao) which is a chain of restaurants specializing in a great big salad-

and-vegetable bar, with waiters who come around to your table with various meats on metal skewers — chicken wrapped in bacon, several cuts of roast beef, sausages — and they keep coming back, until you've had your fill.

We were joined by Dr. Hector and his pretty wife, Rita, at Porxo. We ate, and ate, and ate. So far, Brazilian food had been totally irresistible. Now we were eating hearts of palm, superb vegetables and farinas. Brazilians like their food and rich Brazilians are gourmets; at least, *our* rich Brazilians were.

Then on again, driving to the only shopping open on Sunday, a spread of colored tents, striped awnings and handmade booths in a city park, called the Hippie Market. There, I found exactly the kinds of things I wanted to buy in Rio, including handmade clay pipes from the Amazon, decorated with bits of jaguar fur or teeth.

We drove home to get ready for an evening spectacular. Shura and I dressed up (no tie, of course) and were driven to a big theater called Scala. Our transportation was furnished by the daughter and son-in-law of the neighbors, Delia and Tomas. Delia spoke French and Portuguese, her husband only Portuguese, so Shura and I talked in French, with a bit of Spanish thrown in (usually by me) when in doubt.

Delia translated for Tomas. He had a few questions to ask about psychedelic mushrooms, which he had taken and liked. He wanted to know how to identify them, and Shura launched into one of his professorial expositions, speaking a bit slower than usual, because he had to explain everything in somewhat halting French; he also gave Tomas some information about poisonous species and their dire effects.

At Scala, which was an immense two-tiered tourist showplace, we had a long table right next to the stage. Our companions were the core members of the Family, again, with one new and welcome addition: Dr. Sol, the young chemist who had been assigned to assist Shura in the lab, and learn his method of making MDMA.

Sr. Leo bought a program for us and later insisted on paying for photos taken by the theater photographer. We had no Brazilian money, since we hadn't had a chance to change our American dollars, and Giorgio had told us to wait until Monday, when such exchanges would open again. In the meantime, everyone made clear, we should ask for anything we wanted and it would be provided. We had no choice, but promised each other we'd repay somehow.

The gold curtains parted, and the show, "Golden Brasil" began. Music very loud, costumes loaded with sequins, the showgirls' smiles glued in place, host of ceremonies in white satin with lots of dark face makeup and Las Vegas good looks. His smile was a dazzling gleam-o-rama of white

teeth. Ziegfield Follies costumes, towering headdresses, feathers everywhere, even on the shoulders of the host of ceremonies. Bare breasts for most of the girls and minimum underwear, if any, under the satin pants of the young male dancers. My impression was that you could tell the status of the females by whether or not they wore something over their breasts. Claudia, the singing star, was fully dressed in satin, sequins and feathers.

Very pretty ladies, around 18 to 20 years old, good dancers. Some of them actually seemed to be enjoying themselves, during some of the acts, but most looked the way showgirls usually look — capped teeth fixed in professional smiles, eyes focused elsewhere. A few probably stoned. Excellent dancing.

The costumes emphasized the same thing that the mini-Bikinis of Rio emphasize: the derriere. (I had seen postcards of mini-clad bathing beauties on the beach, and not a single card showed any girl from the front.) Derrieres are very popular, and there was a lot of fooling around on the stage which emphasized the attraction of the "bum-bum," (pronounced "boom-boom,") as it's called in Brazil.

One thing was quite apparent on stage, as it is everywhere else in Rio: they are proud of their mixture of races, and like to draw attention to it. Which is very nice. The U.S. could use a bit of what they have here, in regard to race-mixing. People boast about their native Indian or "Negro" roots, and on the stage, the "naughty boys" running after the girls were black, and the most popular and acclaimed dancing group were the Mulattos.

The Mulattos did a real samba. The real samba is quite a dance. It's said that very few people can do it properly, since it takes a flexibility of joints, including hips, and an unbelievable quickness of foot. Whatever it takes, the Mulattos had it. One of the best parts of the show.

The second best part of the show was a bearded man who danced as The Gaucho (which is apparently Brazilian as well as Argentinian) and did extraordinary things with two strings tipped with small wooden balls, swinging them faster than the eye could see, the balls rattling in a fierce rhythm on the floor. Wonderful.

The loud, stomping, brassy show, the glittering tons of sequins, the Las Vegas atmosphere, reminded me of what we were already discovering about Brazil — at least, the Rio part of it — a lot of sparkle and activity overlying a great disquiet, anxiety and anger, because of the impossible and getting worse economic and political situation. I found myself thinking of the tall skyscraper apartment, buildings set against the hills with their massed favela shacks, the poor living in utter deprivation, no sewage system, no running water, barely enough food to keep the children alive. And then, of course, the inflation, not as bad as Argentina, but bad enough

to promise serious trouble very soon.

Corazon had told us, "Men work but sometimes they aren't paid. Eggs used to be, about a year ago, 10 cents a dozen; now they're a dollar. Often the workers can't afford the bus fare to get to their jobs."

Inevitably, as she explained it, a dreadful hopelessness sets in, and nobody cares any more, because even those with two or three jobs can't make enough to keep up with the inflation, so they stop trying to work hard. The increase in street crime reflects all this, and the increase in house break-ins.

Dr. Sol, Shura's new partner in chemistry, turned out to be young, funny, very bright, and slightly Americanized, having spent four years on the East Coast, where he studied. When the show ended, he said to Shura, "Since I am invited to your house this evening, perhaps you and your wife would like to go with me, in my car?" We accepted with pleasure.

During the drive, we were made aware of a quite different point of view, regarding the MDMA-making and the proposed clinic.

Shura began the conversation by saying, "Well, I am very happy to hear that you will be working with me in Doctor Roberto's hospital, making the MDMA. I've heard that you are a fine chemist, and it will certainly make my job easier to have you by my side!"

Dr. Sol smiled broadly and nodded, then turned serious, "I don't know if anyone has mentioned it to you, but my participation in this adventure must be kept — ah — as quiet as possible, because of my company, you understand?"

Shura said he understood, although I knew he didn't at all; neither of us did.

A small, uncomfortable silence settled in, and I decided to open up the subject and find out exactly why Dr. Sol was uncomfortable. I spoke up from the back seat, "Why would your company object to your involvement with this matter?"

His answer was a bit hesitant, as if he were searching for the right words, perhaps not wanting to offend, "The owners are American, and they are quite — ah — conservative. They would not be happy that I am doing chemistry work outside of the company." He paused, then continued, "And there is another concern. The legal status of MDMA is not clear in Brazil. But, in general, we follow the First World industrialized countries when it comes to recommendations on drugs, unless our government decides otherwise for reasons of its own."

*Uh-oh. That means nobody really knows for sure if making MDMA in Brazil actually is legal or just not illegal, or what. Maybe Giorgio and company are just being very optimistic, when they talk to us, and maybe it's not as clear-cut as they're making it seem.*

Shura shifted in his seat and tried to summarize, "So it's actually in limbo, not really clear, whether it's legal to make it here and use it in a clinic, is that what you mean?"

"As I understand it," said Dr. Sol, "It is important for our people to give good reasons, maybe like research in AIDS patients, or terminally ill people, and to get permission from somebody in the government to do this. But without such permission, it is, yes, a limbo situation. Unknown."

Another small silence. Then Shura said, "Do you know if anyone is actually proposing this plan to the right people in government, or are we hearing only intentions and hopes?"

Dr. Sol made a sharp right turn and I saw the familiar entrance gate to the Rich People's enclave where we were staying. In the headlights I caught sight of a large tree with immense white flowers, and caught my breath.

*These are the tropics, the tropics; it's all so luxuriant, so rich, everything growing, growing, sometimes inches every day. Almost too much to take in.*

Dr. Sol slowed the car for the first speed bump within the compound, and replied to Shura's question, "Yes and no. Doctor Hector has a close friend who knows the right officials in the government, and I understand that he — the friend — is very soon going to talk to them and get approval for the clinic plans, so it seems to me logical that we can go ahead and prepare the MDMA for use, now that you are down here to show us the procedure."

I could feel Shura relaxing, letting it all go.

*We have to trust these people. After all, Giorgio and Dr. Hector are pretty powerful; they know important people, and they have access to them, so if they believe it's okay to go ahead, then we need to stop worrying about it and leave it in their hands.*

Back at the house, Dr. Hector and our hosts were already settling in on the big, comfy couch and chairs. Lena served iced tea and wine, and the conversation for the first few minutes was about the show at the Scala. After the laughter and reminiscences subsided, Giorgio leaned forward and said, "Now, I have some interesting pieces of information concerning Mr. Borch that Doctor Hector and I think you will want to hear."

Everyone looked at him, and in the sudden silence, I could hear the leaves of the house plants rustling slightly.

*It's so damned muggy; I hope that's the sound of moving air.*

"First," Giorgio said, "I read to you from a report by a private detective who was employed to find out why Mr. Borch left the United States, so many years ago." Our host, blue eyes hooded, looked around at the rest of us, his large face serious and intent.

*I'll bet he's enjoying the drama, though.*

"The subject," he read out loud, "Is suspected of having embezzled stock from a well-known investment firm in Chicago, and is still being sought for questioning in that matter."

*Oh, boy! That should do it for any lingering emotional ties to the charming Mr. Borch!*

Lena sat, hands to her face, looking truly shocked. She said something in Portuguese which I guessed meant, "My God!" Dr. Sol leaned back in his armchair and nodded thoughtfully, while Shura and I did our best to look grave and hide our satisfaction. (As we admitted to each other in private, later, we were relieved to hear some solid evidence of what had been mostly, up to now, only a continuing sense of unease and distrust, whenever we heard about the doings of Mister B.)

After some spirited talk about Mr. Borch, the Fugitive From Chicago, Dr. Hector came up with the gem of the evening, at least for Shura and me. He chuckled and said to Giorgio, "Do you remember when he told us that the Essence medicine at the spa had been made personally by Borodin, and I said that I wanted to go and find Alexander Borodin myself, to ask him questions about it? He told us that Borodin was 'the Pope' of this entire area of knowledge, do you remember, Giorgio? And he warned me that I should not try to see him under any circumstances, that this great scientist was unapproachable and high up and that only Borch himself had any chance of gaining admittance to that particular holy of holies!"

Shura was grinning, and I gave way completely to laughter, arms wrapped over my stomach, almost sliding off the chair. It just wasn't the moment to worry about being ladylike.

Shura asked, "Did he actually use the word, 'Pope?'"

Giorgio nodded vehemently, "Yes, yes, I swear to you!"

I managed to croak, "I especially like the idea of being the Pope's wife!"

On that supremely cheerful note, we called it a night.

MONDAY:

It was raining in Rio. We were alone with Corazon in the house, our hosts having gone back to their apartment in the city for the day. Over lunch, Corazon filled us in on the situation in Brazil as she knew or believed it, including who were the best and worst presidents (the current one was among the worst). She explained the virtues of the young man running for president in the November election, and told us about his idiotic mother, who made a television appearance and said all the wrong things about the blacks, the Indians and the poor. "But," she added, "People know that you can't be held responsible for your relatives. I do not think it will hurt him."

She believed that the former Brazilian presidents who died by "suicide" or "accident" were murdered (probably true). She told us about the "big hats," who are in positions of power, and who accumulate money without doing anything at all for the public. She said that all workers are paid at the end of the month — if they are paid, that is — because that way the employers can get the interest from the banks, which they don't pass on to the workers. Political corruption is rife, endemic, pervasive and all over the place.

Corazon talked about her good and wonderful former employers, the Draggio family (he was the one burned in the attempted assassination), who were not what she calls "uppy-noses," but very good people with good minds. And she warned us about shopping, "Look at the prices before you talk to the manager of the store to buy, because otherwise, they see your face, the price goes up."

*I guess she means they can tell you're a foreigner.*

She poured our second cups of coffee, cleared away the scrambled egg plates, and said, "Jacques Cousteau made a documentary about the cutting down of the Rain Forest, and made all Brazilians aware of the situation, and he is a great hero for doing this."

Shura and I exchanged glances and turned in our seats to face her, nodding encouragement. Neither of us had seen the documentary, but we were both deeply concerned about the Rain Forest and what was happening to it.

According to Corazon, Cousteau had made clear that the Indian tribes in the Amazon are or were being killed off or forced into 20th century ways of life, which was destructive to them. But Corazon believed that the real villains in the Amazon were not the Brazilian government people, but the "Spanish people." We understood that she meant the Spanish-speaking people, the non-Brazilians, who had come barging in from other South American countries to rape the Amazon Rain Forest of its wealth. She had apparently not heard that the Brazilians themselves, and their government, were doing most of the damage. What she had been told was that the poor government couldn't do anything, that it was powerless to prevent the trouble.

I suppose this was one place where we privately doubted Corazon's information, keeping in mind that most of the time we trusted her views more than those of the wealthy people who usually surrounded us. We had seen their response to the favelas, heard their theories about laziness and bad character being the cause of poverty and unemployment, and failed to hear a single word, so far, from any of those generous and thoughtful people, about the destruction of the great green Lungs-of-the-World to the north.

After breakfast, we retired to our little writing nest on the top floor, and did a bit of work, then felt sleepy (both of us tended to have moments like that, now and then, probably adjusting to the tropical humidity). We went to the bedroom and lay together on the bed, looking out through the open sliding door to the lovely view outside. Across the street, the colors of roof tiles (red) and tree leaves (yellow and green) were sharpened by the rain. We napped for a while.

Later, in the afternoon, Corazon enticed us into a superb dish she'd made for us, a chayote souffle, which I raved over, since I had long loved chayotes — called chou-chou in Brazil — but didn't really know how to use them well.

That evening, we were due to talk — both of us — to a roomful of people, including some VIP's, doctors and psychiatrists who were interested in the general area of psychoactive drugs. Dr. Hector would translate. Shura decided to wear a white shirt and tie for this event, and I agreed it was probably a good idea, tactically speaking, when addressing a professional audience, even in relaxed, informally dressed Rio.

We drove to the Miramar Hotel with Pierre and Helena again, using our French. Actually, it was mostly Shura's French, but I chimed in every now and then, just to show that my heart was in the right place.

In the penthouse of the hotel, we were escorted into a room with large windows and a bar where I was able to get a glass of ice water, and there we met with some of the people who had come to hear from us about psychoactive drugs in general, and MDMA therapy in particular. Men, in this case, shook hands with Shura, North American style, while women did the kiss-kiss as usual. Dr. Hector introduced the people — several physicians among them — who spoke minimal or no English; those who spoke English well introduced themselves.

After about fifteen minutes of handshaking and smiling, we were shown to another room and a small stage, where a long table had been set up. There were three chairs for Shura, me, and our translator, Dr. Hector. I sat to his right, Shura to his left, and while he addressed the audience in Portuguese, I scanned the faces, recognizing our hosts and several people from the Saturday MDMA group, as well as the medical contingent we had just met in the other room.

It was my debut as an official speaker. I heard Dr. Hector introduce me as "Doctor Alice," (despite my request not to) and prepared for someone in the audience, sooner or later, to ask whether I was a psychiatrist or a psychologist, at which point I was going to have to say, "Neither, just a therapist," which might or might not lead to even more probing questions.

Shura gave his presentation, having some difficulty with the brand new experience of being translated as he went along. It took a while for him



to remember to deliver only a phrase or two before turning to Dr. Hector for the translation. Since Shura is used to talking to an audience at 150 mph, with digressions right and left, it presented him with some moments of frustration, until he got the hang of it. And it was certainly the first time I'd ever heard him talk at a normal rate of speed in public.

The usual questions came from all quarters. Now and then, when it was a matter of a therapeutic application of MDMA, for instance, Shura would turn to me, or Dr. Hector would. I found myself without the expected stage-fright, perhaps because I already knew a great many of the faces by then. But also, most probably, because I felt absolutely sure of what I was saying, and of how to say it. Nice feeling.

Halfway through the whole business, we got another translator who not only knew English better than Dr. Hector, he also had a gift of being able to present ideas — Shura's and his own — with great flair and poetry. He kept getting applause. This was Dr. Leon, whom we had not met before.

There were about twenty or so people in the audience, and the entire thing lasted, not the expected hour and a half, but a whole three hours. Toward the end, when I had been the recipient of the questions for some time, I felt my face flushing with the increased expectation of that dreaded confrontation, but it didn't happen. I was never asked for my credentials, heaven knows why.

When it was over, Shura came up to me and quietly said that he was very proud of me, that I had acquitted myself superbly, and a couple of other nice things along that line. It was the best compliment I could possibly have been given, and he was the one person from whom it was most meaningful.

We had supper in the hotel dining room with Dr. Roberto, the charming, shrewd plastic surgeon, his mistress Marina, and the young Dr. Leon, who had helped us out as second translator. He turned out to be the head of the department of pharmacology at one of the universities, and was apparently well respected by the medical community. He revealed that he had taken many psychedelics, having both good and bad trips, and he expressed to us his immense respect for their power, for what they made possible.

We went to bed late, knowing that — as Shura phrased it — "We done good, kid!"

TUESDAY:

Up at 6:00 a.m. for Lab Day. The original plan had allowed for three days, but that had been the plan attached to the early idea of two labs. Gradually, from odd conversations around us, we began to understand the two-lab plan as having been an effort on the part of Dr. Roberto and his allies

to have MDMA synthesized in one lab for the use of an inner circle (chosen by Dr. Roberto from among his intimate friends) and another batch made in another lab for the clinic-to-be. Now it was one lab, one synthesis, and the battle between the two factions would take place without our participation; it wasn't our concern.

Giorgio was taking us in his car and, during the ride, the conversation turned to the driving of cars, and Giorgio filled us in on the rules of the road in Rio. First, he said, nobody pays attention to lane markings. You just sort of drive ahead, being careful to avoid everyone else who is just sort of driving ahead, too. Rio traffic is like traffic on the German Autobahn; those who are at the wheel are liable to be excellent drivers, because all others are either dead or in the hospital. Also, after 10 p.m., nobody stops for red lights, apparently to avoid being held up by robbers. The red lights are observed again after 7:30 a.m., when the rush hour begins, but in between, you simply watch out and drive carefully. (Especially when the light is green.)

We drove over the bridge to the city of Niteroi. It was raining, off and on, as it would all day — and the rest of the week. The tropics, I thought to myself, look most tropical in the rain. The poor-cousin city of Niteroi looked more genuinely Brazilian, somehow, than the glamorous Rio. There were more of the little cantinas with their bottled fruit drinks, and lots of small children in short pants and dirty undershirts. I glimpsed grey-white walls invaded by the ever-present fungus, and noted that the tall condominiums were fewer than in Rio. The graffiti were the same, though; no building was safe from them.

We arrived at a place on the far side of the city, in *a* suburb full of large, luxurious-looking houses.

The clinic building was large, and we were told that it was entirely devoted to plastic surgery. Its lobby had all the marble and leather appropriate to a place whose clientele is mostly wealthy women.

The lab turned out to be a recently abandoned one, a long, narrow room with a bench running its entire length, and a sink. Someone had boasted to Shura, the day before, that "The laboratory has running water!" Which had led us both to some feverish speculation as to how impossible this whole situation was going to be. We already knew that all, or most, of the lab equipment, glassware and essential chemicals, would be brought in by Dr. Sol, Shura's fellow chemist for the day — from his own company laboratory. What else we would find, what conditions, we were afraid to guess.

There were windows all along the bench-wall, and we opened most of them in anticipation of wild smells to come. Dr. Hector came in, then Sr. Draggio, then the handsome Dr. Roberto, who took my arm and said, "Come with me for a moment; I want you to see my new laboratory!" He led me

upstairs to what turned out to be a very large, well-equipped lab indeed, and I expressed my surprise and admiration. He grinned proudly, then excused himself, "I have to leave you now; there is a breast-implant waiting for me. Please tell your husband I send to him my good wishes for his endeavors, and I will see all of you later!"

When I returned to the scene of the chemistry, Dr. Sol had arrived. Giorgio informed us that he, himself, would hang around to watch the proceedings until a bit later, when he had an appointment with a Brigadier General back in Rio.

Now and then, some stranger would pop in through the door and look around, then duck back out, but nobody paid any attention. I assumed they were clinic personnel who had heard rumors about something going on in the old lab, and wanted to see for themselves. Shura and Sol were already busy, unpacking equipment, and I heard the beginning of what would become a familiar accompaniment to the doings of the day — bursts of soft-voiced, sing-song cursing on the part of Shura, as he examined the equipment he was expected to use in making MDMA.

At one point, he called me over from my seat in the far corner of the lab, to look at a roll of aluminum foil, one of the essential ingredients in the process. It hadn't occurred to us that we perhaps should have brought our own aluminum foil from the United States, until we looked at the rolls they had there for our use.

Shura said to me, "Feel this, kid. It's thinner than the U.S. regular foil — much thinner." He looked concerned.

I crumpled a piece and agreed, "Yes, I see what you mean. But I don't understand; what difference does that make?"

"It's going to react faster and burn hotter, that's what it means."

"Oh," I said.

I don't know the first thing about chemistry, but I had learned some of the steps in making MDMA, many years ago; I'd done it not just to help make a good supply for the use of our therapist friends, but also to find out whether I had any unsuspected knack for chemistry. (It hadn't taken long for both of us to come to the conclusion that I didn't.)

One part of the process I remembered very well, the part where you weigh out a certain amount of cut aluminum foil into a big flask, then add a whole series of other chemicals and watch for heat to develop in the mixture, and as soon as it gets pretty hot, you dunk the glass flask into a pot of cold water, and you continue swirling the mixture and immersing the bottom half of the flask in the water until the heat begins to drop and the threat of a boil-over is gone.

I had volunteered to take care of this early part of the process, and I could visualize all too well what Shura was warning me about: rapid heat

gain, boil-over, loss of too much valuable product, mess.

But first, we had to get to work, tearing strips of aluminum foil. Dr. Hector was drafted to help me, and had to suffer the inevitable teasing from both Sol and Shura, things like, "Who would have thought to see the former Assistant Minister of Transportation and Housing sitting on a stool in an old lab, tearing up aluminum foil! What is going on here?" And other such idiocies. To all of which he replied with a slightly conspiratorial smile, followed by even more diligent tearing.

Dr. Sol had carried in several cartons of equipment, some of it perfectly fine, some of it barely usable. There was an old rotary evaporator which wobbled alarmingly; Shura patched it with duct tape. There was a superb Buchner funnel among the treasures, but no sign of filter paper of the right size, so our boys cut out a substitute from a piece of paper towel.

Shura was beginning to go happily manic, and kept teasing Sol about Third World this and that, and the young chemist teased right back, caught in the energy. Hooking up, pulling down, fitting on, screwing in, both of them were delighted with the challenge one moment, despairing the next, hoping all over again, and mildly hysterical most of the time. They knew pretty well what they were dealing with, and what they would have to invent or do without, and — as Dr. Hector said later, reverently — "We were treated to a ballet of enthusiastic creativity, with Sol moving gracefully, doing what he had to do, following Shura's directions and cautions, while Shura danced." Occasionally, when the Pope's eyes met mine, he rolled them wildly, and I grinned back.

I should note that our group of people (upper-crust? uppy-nose? The Rich?) not only didn't hesitate to refer to Brazil as Third World, they were almost eager to point out that that's what it was. However, after the day in the lab, I did suggest to Shura that perhaps he should tone down his references to Fourth, Fifth and Seventh World (this last being used to describe the balance brought into the clinic by Sol).

When it was time to manage the first reaction — by dunking the rapidly heating flask in a large stainless steel bucket of cold water at the appropriate time — I sat on the floor at the end of the lab, and soon discovered that I'd made a mistake. I was down in a corner, and there was no flow of air from the windows to dissipate the fumes. There wasn't much I could do about it for the moment, though; once the reaction was launched, it kept going, and had to be attended to.

Because of the thin-ness of the aluminum, the reaction was going hotter and faster than I'd ever seen it go before, and suddenly it boiled up and out of the top of the flask, although only a fraction of material was lost. I continued immersing it in the water, and the boiling subsided. As everyone was talking about getting ice-cubes from somewhere to keep the

water cold, Dr. Hector, in shirtsleeves, came over and sat down beside me on the small stool he had used earlier. He produced a folded magazine and vigorously fanned my face, trying to get some air to me as I coughed — and laughed — in a cloud of methylamine.

For the second flask (we were only doing two), the chemists sat me up over the sink, and a fan was brought in to train on my face. The fan had no front guard; otherwise it was fine. The second flask heated much more slowly, with no boilover, and when I asked why it was going so much better, Shura said, "I made some adjustments," and I said, "Well, they seem to have worked."

Finally, I'd done my part, and I went on a brief exploratory journey down the corridors of the clinic, passing nurses and doctors and the occasional patient in bandages, before returning to the lab and its strange crew. Dr. Hector was still seated on his little stool, watching Shura and Sol as they measured, stirred and poured, occasionally grunting in code to each other.

I went over to Dr. Hector. He pulled my sleeve to bring my head closer to his, and whispered to me, "It is like being present at the birth of a royal baby." I smiled at him and patted his shoulder.

*He's such a funny, dear man; pretty romantic for a politician. But, then, this is Brazil; everything's a bit different in Brazil.*

Dr. Roberto dropped in again, this time with his physician son, both of them dressed for surgery, just to see that everything was proceeding well.

I kept feeding small cups of Brazilian coffee to the chemists and myself, then finally went off to a small room which Dr. Roberto had invited me to use if I wanted to rest. In the small attached bathroom, I washed my face and combed my hair and noted that there were no washcloths.

*I wonder if washcloths just aren't used in Brazil. Do other South American countries have them? Funny how you take little things like that for granted because you grow up with them, but washcloths aren't really essential to life, are they? They use these little handtowels instead, I guess.*

Dr. Roberto took us to lunch — Dr. Hector, Sol, Shura and myself — at another Porxo. This time, we ate more modestly. We talked briefly about what was happening in the Rain Forest, and Dr. Roberto dismissed all "rumors" about the killing of Indians. Never happened, he said, and we said Oh, happy to hear that, and didn't pursue the subject. The Rain Forest and its Indians were obviously not one of the great doctor's major concerns.

After lunch, he drove us to what I later decided was one of my favorite places of the entire trip. The drive was up a hill, past banana trees, which I'd never seen in person before. Small green bunches of ripening bananas were visible, with a large, wine-colored, heart-shaped pod hanging from each tree.

At the top of the hill, there was a crumbling cement overlook and the remnants of a spiral staircase to an upper level which no longer existed. The view was lovely, and we were surrounded by palm trees and flowering bushes of different kinds, and it was the tropics, the real tropics, again. I liked that place, with its quiet, and the humid air which had been cooled by the rain, and I would have liked spending some time there. But after a few minutes, we were off again, back to the Great Work. On the way down, Dr. Roberto pointed out a mango tree, which looked to me a lot like a mimosa, only not quite.

When we got back to the lab, I stood for a few minutes watching as the two chemists resumed work. Then I remembered that this was the 4th of July, and Shura's and my wedding anniversary.

*What better place to spend our anniversary than in a Third World clinic laboratory, making MDMA for research which might or might not ever actually take place, and if it did take place, might or might not ever produce an acceptable scientific paper; with an ever-changing audience watching two hilarious chemists wondering how they were going to manage with the antiquated equipment, trading friendly insults, thoroughly enjoying the challenge. No better place.*

I retired to my own personal room and went to sleep on the hospital bed. Slept soundly for a couple of hours.

When I returned to the lab, things were coming to an end. Shura told me that there was no proper distillation equipment, so Sol was going to take the product to his own company lab and complete the distillation there. Discreetly.

They started repacking the glassware and the chemicals in their cardboard boxes, while a tired audience watched. Now it was Dr. Roberto and Marina, with their little daughter, the beautiful Katya. Also Dr. Hector and Giorgio, and a young man who was introduced as an assistant to Sol.

Little bites of Brazilian pastry were brought up on a tray, and between mouthfuls, everyone talked and asked questions and laughed and offered congratulations.

Finally, the guests left for a while, and the two chemists were alone in the lab, cleaning up. I was outside the door, at that point, just standing there with another cup of the strong, fragrant coffee, when I heard loud yells from inside. Both Shura and Sol were shouting, "Gimme five! Gimme another five!" at the top of their lungs. I opened the door, stifling laughter, and reminded them, in a stage whisper, that this WAS a hospital, yes, and maybe a bit quieter, no? They put their fingers to their mouths like guilty schoolboys, and subsided after one last vehement slap of each other's palms.

Back home, our host and hostess settled in front of the television downstairs, to watch a Portuguese-dubbed re-run of the movie "Dune." I

told them that my favorite person in the movie was the hero's baby sister, the blue-eyed, lisping little girl with telekinetic powers. This seemed to amuse them.

We went upstairs to write our notes for the day and fall into bed.

### WEDNESDAY

This was supposed to be a day of writing and quiet — nothing exciting going on — until the evening, when we would dress up for Dr. Roberto's birthday party at his home. So we were all alone in the house, both of us writing in the little study, with only Corazon downstairs. At around 11 a.m., we heard her feet on the stairs, and she appeared with a carafe of coffee and two mugs for us, moving slowly because she was seven months pregnant, going on eight. We thanked her effusively for having gone to all that trouble, then we asked her some questions about her young husband's new job in Mato Grosso, questions such as, is Mato Grosso a state or a town or both, and what kind of job, and she began telling us, tracing on the map the location of the town called Mato Grosso, talking a bit slower than usual.

Then, suddenly, she sat down on a chair beside me and said, "I have to tell you something. I am feeling very strange, and it is because I took some of the medicine that is in the refrigerator. Delia (next door) said that she took it when she had problems and it helped her very much, and that I should take some, just a little bit, so I did."

Shura and I looked at each other, then Shura asked her how much she had taken, and she tried to indicate with thumb and forefinger, then said she would show us in the refrigerator, so we all went very carefully down the stairs, Corazon holding onto my hand for dear life, until we reached the kitchen. We were making reassuring noises, telling her to go slowly, step over the telephone cord, be careful here, take it easy there.

In the refrigerator door, there were two bottles, one empty. The red liquid was gone; the yellow was left. Corazon showed us how much she had measured out in the bottle cap, and we later estimated that it might have been, probably, possibly, maybe about 150 milligrams of MDMA. We helped her recap the bottle and put everything back in the 'frig, telling her that this would remain a secret between the three of us, and she said thank you.

(That, of course, was a somewhat unrealistic promise, because eventually, someone would be sure to notice the empty bottle and probably ask questions, but for the moment, we were going to pretend that none of that would happen.)

We went into the living room, Corazon holding onto the back of my shoulders as I moved, saying to both of us, "I like you very much," to which

we replied, truthfully, that we liked her very much, too. On the couch, she sat with her knee touching mine, holding onto my hand except when waving both of hers to illustrate a point. Her eyes were dilated and you could actually see the nystagmus, the eye-wiggle, if you watched for it. We told her it was normal with the medicine and would calm down, and not to worry about it. She laughed and told us it didn't bother her. Shura observed that she was talking through her teeth, and she laughed again when she realized he was right. We suggested a wet cloth (no washcloths in Brazil) and I brought her a handtowel to chew on. I told her that the grinding of teeth was normal, too, "It happens to everybody who takes this medicine for the first time, my dear — for the first few times, in fact — this and the eye wiggling; they won't hurt you, they're just annoying."

Corazon said she didn't mind any of it; it was all right. She added, "*Everything is all right.*"

*Yes, yes; she's getting that first magical gift of a good MDMA experience, the deep sense that the universe is in balance, that — despite all evidence to the contrary — all things really are going the way they're supposed to.*

We sat there, Shura and I, gazing at the familiar features, now transformed. This was a different Corazon, her shining black hair framing a brown-skinned face softened and radiant as that of a girl of sixteen; frown lines had vanished from around eyes and mouth, and she was one of the most beautiful people I had ever seen. When I glanced at Shura, at the expression of awe on his face as he looked at Corazon, I knew he was seeing her as I did.

Then she said, "I want to tell you about myself, because you are good people, with good minds, and I do not want you to see me as just the maid and a good cook, you know? I want you to see me as a person."

We nodded and Shura replied, softly, "We are very glad to have the opportunity to know you as a person."

I smiled and squeezed her hand.

She had gone to New York, she said, when she was 16 or 17, and married a young Italian, a blond Italian whose family was very white and didn't like her because she was dark. "In my family," she said, "Because we are a mixture of races, some of my sisters are blond and some are dark like me, and I am proud of all the different bloods I have inside me."

But the Italian family treated her like dirt and kept telling the boy he should get rid of her and marry someone who didn't look like a Negro. She said she had never had this kind of treatment before in Brazil, and it was very hard, but she kept her pride.

One of the things she was proudest of, she told us, was her grandmother on her mother's side, who had been an Indian woman in the Amazon jungle, painted face and all, climbing trees for fruit, knowing about



the uses of plants and leaves and roots and stems for different kinds of sickness.

"She was a wonderful, wise woman," said Corazon, "And I learned very much about that kind of medicine from her, and I wrote everything down in a little notebook that I keep always with me."

She said she had to work in New York and that her family in Brazil, which is very large, kept asking her to send money, and she sent all she could, but she had to live also, and she and her husband were very poor. Finally, she told us, the pressures got too much for her; the hard work, the discrimination, the hostility of her in-laws, the loneliness, the constant demands from her family back home. One day she'd had enough, she was too tired, always too tired so she couldn't think clearly anymore, and she climbed out of a window and let herself fall.

We didn't ask from what floor.

Corazon said, several times, emphatically, "I did not have the plan to kill myself. I just wanted a rest. I wanted everything to stop for a while, you know? So I could rest."

We both nodded.

She sustained fractures of most of her facial bones, hip and leg bones, and she was in the hospital for eight months. "I got the rest," she said. There was a good doctor who talked to her and gave her courage, and when she was healed, he got her a good job at a fancy restaurant, where she made decent money.

She told her husband that she was going back to Brazil, and asked him to come with her, but he didn't want to. She said, "We loved each other, but it wasn't enough." He told her he would go to Africa and marry another black woman (so there! to his parents) and she said goodbye and went back home.

She asked us if we would mind if she showed us something very personal, and we said go ahead. She released my hand and took out her upper teeth and her lower teeth, then popped them back in. Her jaw, she told us, was synthetic and her cheekbones were too. She pulled up her skirt, just far enough to show us the long, wide scar down the side of her right leg.

"You see?" she said, with an almost conspiratorial smile.

We told her, speaking the truth, that she was beautiful.

She reached over and took my hand again.

"When I returned to Brazil," she told us, "I took some of the money I saved from my good job in New York, and I went to the best cooking school in Rio." Now, in the town of Mato Grosso, where her new young husband had a job doing carpentry, some people who ran a ranch of some kind had asked her to train their kitchen staff. She was very pleased because it was something she knew she could do well. She was going to journey to Mato

Grosso as soon as this job — taking care of us — was over.

She said, "I want to learn everything I can while I am alive, and I like to spend time around people with good, rich minds, and you are people who have minds like that, and I am so glad I met you."

We told her we were learning a lot from her, more than from the other people around us, and Shura said, "Thank you for sharing so much with us — about Brazil and about yourself."

Corazon reached out with her free left hand, and Shura took it in both of his. His eyes were wet.

When she began coming down, we urged her to rest on her bed, while we dressed for our evening out. She said that the doctor had told her the baby was small, so she had to try to make it bigger before it was born. She asked if we thought she had done something wrong in taking the medicine, and we said no, it wasn't wrong (this was not the time for a lecture), but she shouldn't take anything like that again until after the baby was born and weaned. She said all right, she understood.

We hugged each other, and she went downstairs to her room.

"You never know —" said Shura, back in our bedroom, "— where the next lesson is going to come from."

"Wow," said I.

When we were dressed, we were picked up by Giorgio and Lena and driven to the home of Dr. Roberto. We were now going to meet his wife, the handsome, gracious (according to our hosts) Clara, who went through life admired by all who knew her, and never mentioned or in any way acknowledged the existence of the mistress, Marina, or the lovely little Katya.

Shura, seated in front because of his long legs, turned to Giorgio and said, "I remember, on the lab day, Dr. Roberto came in with his doctor son for a few minutes. Then, much later, when we were packing up, his mistress came in with the little girl. They must have met each other; I mean, the — Marina and her daughter and Roberto's son —"

Lena replied with a chuckle, "But it has not happened yet. And if it did happen, everyone thinks probably they would ignore each other."

I said what a pity that the adult sons and the young Katya could not form some kind of relationship; it seemed un-natural and sad that they pretended each other didn't exist. Our hosts said, but that's the way they are doing it, and yes, it is a pity.

Our surgeon's house was very large, with an immense living room

whose walls were hung with paintings — good ones, mostly modern and by Brazilian artists, but one signed Klee — and we were greeted by the gracious Clara, who was, as advertised, a very handsome woman; she had

a slim figure and was dressed in red and black sequins. Looking around at the roomful of expensively dressed women, one gathered that sequins were in, this season.

Outside the living room was a big deck with numerous tables set for guests. The deck ended at what I thought was a swimming pool (I hadn't realized we were on the bay), until I looked to the right and saw a yacht floating on the water. A large yacht. Shura came out onto the deck behind me, and I poked his arm and pointed. He whistled softly, and we both stood there, looking at the pretty boat in reverent silence.

"This," I remarked, "Is why people become plastic surgeons in Brazil."

"I do congratulate you," he said, "On a remarkable bit of insight."

A few minutes later, rain was beginning to fall. We sat at a table in a protected part of the huge deck with Giorgio and Lena, and soon Dr. Hector's wife, Rita, joined us. The rain was now coming down heavily and a strong wind was blowing, making the exposed part of the deck uninhabitable. Servants unrolled canvas walls with plastic windows in them, to shield us from the weather, and I saw lightning outside, to my great delight. I love lightning.

Our table now included the chemist, Sol, Sr. Draggo and his pretty young wife, Sonia, who was wearing a simple, expensive little dress of black velvet. Chairs were being borrowed from other tables and dragged over to ours, and the sounds of laughter and loud talk competed with the storm howling outside the canvas cover. I wondered how the yacht was doing.

There was a kind of musical chairs going on with the seat next to Shura. When one inhabitant got up to greet a friend, someone else would sit down. For a while, the young plastic surgeon we'd met the first night was there, talking and asking the usual questions. There was discussion of what everybody had heard about the ballet in the laboratory, the wonderful sight of Senhor Shura dancing around, showing the world that one's work should be joyful.

*Ah, yes; new legends are being born, even as we sit and drink our little drinkies.*

What looked like the rest of Rio's high society was pouring through the front door, visible through the glass wall behind our table. A middle-aged lady with dark hair worn in a tight bun sat at the table next to us, and Lena identified her as a very famous singer, but the name was scattered by a gust of wind. The singer was dressed in dark red sequins.

My ever-present little notepad was remarked on with amusement by all, and I explained that I was gathering names and addresses from our table-mates, omitting the fact that the rest of the notes were somewhat more personal and certainly not for public consumption.

Waiters served canapes, including (of course) caviar, and I watched people at other tables, the women loaded with what I guessed were genuine jewels, some watching our group and whispering discreetly among themselves. One of the late arrivals at our table (hugs and kiss-kiss all round) was the multi-millionaire, Sr. Carlos, and surely everyone at that party knew him by sight (one does not fail to recognize a man worth \$120 million) and his affectionate greeting of Shura and me inspired more whispering.

The clothes were expensive and generally in good taste; the women did their hair in European styles, with no short hair that I could see. Figures were generally svelte, and when I remarked on this, Lena reminded me that most of the women there had had their plastic surgery done by Dr. Roberto, of course. And "lipo," she said, "Everyone loves to have lipo."

I muttered that I was beginning to seriously think about lipo (liposuction), myself. Not to speak of neck, jawline and eyelids. Shura gave me the expected dirty look.

I then said that Shura preferred that I remain my un-retouched self, which occasioned frankly pitying looks all round. They obviously didn't understand how that could be. At that point, neither did I. Ah, well.

There came a call to everyone to come and see the table in the dining room, to admire the setting and the food before the eating began. We all piled into the dining room and made appreciative noises at the beauty of it all, including a centerpiece of fruit and flowers that could well have served as a monument to harvest season at Rockefeller Center.

Then the serving people began filling plates. When I turned around to take mine back to our table, I saw Shura being drawn by Dr. Roberto to the side of the room, where a photographer waited. I smiled and let the crowd jostle me forward again, in the general direction of fresh air.

When Shura rejoined our group, about ten minutes later, I asked him what had happened.

"Well," he said, "Roberto asked me to pose for a picture for some society column, and I gather he was explaining to them about the great scientist from the United States — that's me — and then he took his arm from around my throat —"

I laughed.

"— and I went and got some supper, and here I am."

"Well, at least you're alive, and safe, and that's all that matters, right?"

"Just because you can't see any blood," mumbled Shura, "Doesn't mean there isn't serious trauma. Deeply buried, maybe, but trauma nonetheless."

"I'll keep an eye on you," I said, my mouth half full of asparagus, "Just in case there are symptoms."

Lightning continued to flash outside the walls of our deck, and gusts of wind flapped the canvas. It was a lovely storm.

Dr. Hector told me that he would like to bring two people over to the house on Friday, give them MDMA, and have me do therapy with them, with himself translating and watching, to "See how you do what you do." I explained, urgently, why I did not wish to do such a thing, pointing out that, first, I only work with one patient at a time and second, that whoever works with people who have problems (one of them was apparently his cousin, who has myasthenia gravis and is very depressed), should be the person who can continue working with them in the future, and I was going to be leaving in a few days.

My dear Dr. Hector thought for a while about what I'd said, then shrugged his disappointment and turned away.

(My reluctance was due, in no small part, to the idea of trying to communicate intently with a patient, using terms which are not part of the usual social vocabulary, with a translator between me and the person I'm trying to touch at a very deep level. Not the most satisfying image.)

When we were ready to leave, the handsome, suave Dr. Roberto wasn't around, but we bussed his wife and thanked her enthusiastically for the beautiful evening, while she nodded her head (graciously), probably understanding not a word (we'd been warned that she knew no English), but certainly getting the music, and we left.

#### THURSDAY:

Shura came upstairs with a cup of coffee for me, to help me wake up. This was to be the shopping day.

He sat on the edge of the bed and said, "Our hosts don't seem to quite understand me when I tell them that I don't necessarily want to buy things, just to 'go shopping.' They don't seem to understand the distinction between shopping and buying."

I told him, "You should have tried using the expression, 'window shopping,' but I'm not sure that would have been understood, either. It's okay, though," I added, "Because I fully intend to do buying."

Stopping at various bookstores to find something on the Amazon, Shura found two Portuguese-to-French dictionaries, which we couldn't get at home. I bought two Brazilian cookbooks. We went into a couple of souvenir stores, in which I found great little native nonsense to take home, over-priced. There were countless jewelry stores, some of them with barkers outside them, like North Beach exotic nightclubs, which seemed a bit strange. One is inclined to be suspicious of the quality of gems in a store that hires barkers.

Then up we went to Sonia's apartment to wait for Giorgio to join us, after his dentist appointment. The apartment was gorgeous, luxurious, full of Persian rugs of great quality, mostly Chinese furnishing and porcelain, reminders of Drago's import and export connections.

Sonia insisted on giving us a gift of two lovely Chinese drawings on rice paper and a wonderful ashtray showing one of the "balagandans" (which means bunches) that the Indians make for good luck, like one I'd bought earlier that day. The Brazilians use them as coffee-table knick-knacks or to hang on the wall. They are usually a half-moon of tin or brass from which hang various symbolic fruits and a miniature fist with the thumb protruding between the first two fingers, always made of wood — the Brazilian (phallic) good-luck symbol.

In one corner of the large living room stood a most unusual statue. Shura told me, later, that it was one of probably only three or four in the world outside of China. A life-size-plus terracotta figure of one of the soldiers unearthed at Xian.

I liked Sonia. She had been patient and pleasant company, with Lena, on our shopping trip, and Corazon had spoken of her as a truly good person. And she'd been good to Corazon, which counted for much with Shura and me.

On the way back home there was a discussion in the car about the Family politics. Giorgio said, "You understand that Dr. Roberto wants use of the magic elixir kept for an inner circle of special people, mostly his friends, with almost nothing available for the rest of the Family. Of course, we don't agree."

*Neither do we, kiddo. Amazing, how some people who use MDMA for "spiritual enlightenment" can manage to forget everything they might have learned under the influence, once they're back in their normal state.*

Lena was saying, "— and everyone has a friend or relative who needs MDMA and should have it to help their problems."

Shura asked, "Does that mean he isn't interested in the new clinic and the research?"

Giorgio glanced at him, then back at the road, "Ah, but don't worry, my friend, because we are not going with Dr. Roberto's plan, as I already told you. It is just part of the story of what goes on in the Family."

*And we should keep in mind that we're only hearing one person's version of that story.*

FRIDAY:

At breakfast on Friday morning Giorgio told us that the new MDMA was to be brought over to the house on Saturday afternoon, and the

Family would gather to try it out. Lena patted Shura's arm and asked, "Do you mind if on Saturday evening we gather together, just a small group, to ask some questions?" Shura had replied, "Of course not."

*What the hell can they possibly ask that we haven't already answered? Oh, well. We're tired, at this point, and ready to go home.*

Shura and I remained upstairs, writing, until lunchtime, when we went down to the kitchen and joined our hosts. Corazon had cooked the national dish of Brazil, the feijoada (fey-joe-AH-dah). Black beans, vegetables, fruit and slices of meat. Wonderful. The kind of lunch that guarantees you won't eat supper. It was served in the longest baking dish I'd ever seen.

After lunch, we went with Giorgio to try to find a scale which could weigh milligrams. We went into jewelry stores, into health food stores. Nowhere, no-how. They wouldn't be able to weigh out their new MDMA without one, and now, with the failure of our expedition, Giorgio expressed the hope that Tomas, the next door neighbor, could get one in Sao Paulo in time for the Saturday gathering. My, oh my. The third world is such a mixture of have's and unexpected have-nots, and you can't predict what will or will not be available.

An interesting little incident happened during our expedition into the city with Giorgio to find a proper balance. There is a system in Rio whereby you keep your car protected from vandalism and theft (often of the entire car). When you park, there is always a man who offers to watch your car for you. When you come back, you tip him a couple of cruzados. It's the way he makes his living, and the way you keep your car out of the hands of the Paraguayan military (which is where stolen cars apparently end up).

Now, this time, when Giorgio, Shura and I returned to the car, the guardian was nowhere to be seen. Maybe off having coffee or taking a pee break. I thought, as did Shura, that Giorgio would simply drive off. But no, he looked all around for the man and, not finding him, flagged a policeman and told him that he had money for the man who watches the cars, and since he was absent, could he leave the payment with the policeman? The policeman (Giorgio told us later) said he didn't want to be seen taking money from somebody in a car, so Giorgio said, "Well, how about my shaking your hand; there's nothing suspicious about a handshake, is there?" During the handshake, the money was passed. Shura and I were impressed by the whole negotiation, especially by the desire of Giorgio to make sure the car man got paid.

In response to our obvious question, Giorgio said no, he was sure the policeman would pass on the money.

On we went to Dr. Hector's physiotherapy clinic, which was small but nicely furnished, with pleasant music playing in the background. (It

simply hadn't occurred to me to wonder how, after his government service, he would be making *a* living.) There, we crowded into his little office and met the only representative of a group of three or four physicians who hadn't yet managed to make it to any previous presentation of ours, due to rainy weather, cold feet, or whatever. This turned out to be a cardiologist, Dr. Jorge, for whom we both felt an immediate liking. Tall, with thinning white hair and a shy, quirky smile, tailor-made to elicit maternal response, he had apparently asked Dr. Hector to arrange a personal meeting with us.

We sat alone with him for about an hour, as he talked about his background, and certain growing symptoms of depression. Shura sat back and nodded appropriately, but left the talking to me. Eventually, I suggested that hypnotherapy would probably be his best bet. He asked me whether he should take MDMA, and I told him that MDMA can be very helpful with depression, but that I would suggest trying trance work first, and emphasized the importance of finding a well-respected hypnotherapist with whom he could feel at ease.

When Shura asked me later why I'd dissuaded him from taking MDMA, I explained, "Well, the only people we know who have MDMA available are the so-called Family, and none of them are trained to do therapy with MDMA, even the psychiatrists; they just haven't the experience. Maybe they'll get it in the new clinic. If and when. But this guy needs a therapist who knows what he's doing, and can do it one-on-one, because a group session isn't the right thing for him, right now. If he can find a good hypnotherapist, he can probably get some real help immediately."

The nice Dr. Jorge volunteered another problem, which he said he hesitated to tell anyone, but after spending time with us, he thought we might understand. He said, "I have a trouble of many nights dreaming about my dead friends, who are loving and caring to me in the dream, but I have to fight their faces out of my mind in the morning. It is very hard for me to do this, and I am feeling too vulnerable and a little bit frightened."

I thought for a moment, visualizing this gentle man facing his bathroom mirror, half awake, with dear, dead faces crowding his mind, afraid of the pull to another world that they symbolized.

Going on plain old gut instinct, I said, "Instead of pushing your dead friends away when you wake up, try bringing them along as allies during the day. Any time you feel their presence, invite them to see through your eyes and feel through your skin, and enjoy being with you in what you are doing and experiencing. Think of them as occasionally coming in contact with you, especially in your dreams, to make sure you're all right, because they love you. They are not a danger to you, and after a while they'll go on with their other business and leave you to get on with your life. Does that make sense to you?"



He sat back in his chair, looking at me thoughtfully, then smiled and said, "That makes very much sense, as you say. It is true that I should not be afraid of them; why should I fear dead friends who love me?" He looked over at Shura and back at me, "Thank you very much, both of you."

*Good, good. The idea might have horrified him; thank heaven it didn't. Now, he can stop being afraid and feeling guilty because he's rejecting people he loved when they were alive.*

After the meeting at the clinic, we — Shura, Giorgio and I — stopped at one of the stands that sold coffee and beer and some food. We each had a small coffee, and to my great delight, I saw on the wall menu a listing for "Chisbuger."

#### SATURDAY:

We decided, right after breakfast, to give Corazon \$40 (American), "for the baby." Just between her and us. The \$40 would continually appreciate, because inflation in Brazil was about 40% a month, so if she was as wise as we believed her to be, she would resist changing it into Brazilian money for as long as she could.

The 13 people for the day's ceremony arrived late, of course, for the 11:30 a.m. start, but that's another Rio habit — being late.

The usual group, including the quiet sweet mulatto lady, and the modest masseur, Sr. Waldo.

The session was supposed to start at 11:30 a.m. and by 11:00 o'clock, Tomas had brought the promised balance scale (out of the turn of the century, said Shura), which was on loan from some friend of his in Sao Paulo. On this rather delicate-looking machine, the Pope — watched intently by Dr. Hector, Sol, Giorgio, Lena and the Pope's Wife — measured out 13 doses of 120 mgs. each. New material and a new way of taking it (powder, undisguised by colored liquids). I took pictures with our sturdy old camera, as the faces of our friends, wearing a mixture of expectancy and something close to reverence, clustered over the Great One's shoulder, observing every move.

It was almost noon before the rest of the group began arriving.

Sr. Leo and his Anita gave us a lovely table display of dried plants of Brazil, enclosed in a round plastic container, with a stand. The gentle masseur brought more guarana powder in a plastic wrap as a goodbye gift.

Shura and I ate lunch in the kitchen while the group was having its session. Corazon served us the remains of Friday's gorgeous feijoada, which tasted just as good as it had the day before. When we showed her the collection of Brazilian plants, she pointed at some tiny dried stems visible through the plastic and told us that these were called prickly-plants, and

that if you touched one, and a little spine got into your skin, a mother-wart would form and send out roots, and another wart would grow, and another and another. She said her husband had them all over his body. Apparently they weren't toxic or dangerous, but a bloody nuisance, and once established, couldn't be removed.

We stared silently at the innocent-looking collection, resolving to never, never open the seal.

After lunch, I packed. In about an hour, the meditation and silence were over in the living room and people began talking and laughing. We were called down for photos by everybody's cameras and brief reports — all good, of course. A couple of the women had experienced *a* return of the early effect, which they had not been able to recapture since the first few times taking the Borch MDMA. Carlos (Lena told us) had refused to take Borch's stuff for some time, but said he wanted to take Shura's. Results were reported to be generally excellent. No one seemed to have had a bad experience.

When we were alone again, Shura said, grinning, "Why am I not surprised that everyone had a great time with the new stuff?"

I laughed and remarked that I couldn't imagine why, "But I suspect that you suspect that something called mind-set could be involved. Positive expectations, yes? Strong desire not to betray their faith in the sacred works of the Pope, no?"

"Uh-huh, could be, could be."

For now, we agreed, it was enough that there seemed to have been no negative effects, and that everybody seemed genuinely pleased.

We retired to our writing upstairs. We had both felt that our writing had been a Godsend to us (and to our hosts) because it had given us a valid reason to absent ourselves when we were tired of interacting with everybody (and it had given our hosts more time to themselves).

We worked until almost 5:00 p.m., when Giorgio called us downstairs to sit in the royal seats again, while Dr. Hector gave The Speech about how Shura (and Alice) led in important work for humanity, inspiring all of them to do the same, and so on. They were going to follow our example, he said, and help people instead of making money.

*Hooray, hooray. We are not cynical and we believe. We also hope. Whether the clinic will ever materialize, there's no way to tell, but Dr. Hector and Giorgio, particularly, seem to really want it to happen. So do we.*

Then Giorgio said more wonderful things, and we replied, Shura choking up a bit.

I did not choke up at all, feeling just the tiniest bit removed from all the heartfelt emotions, wondering how long all these idealistic plans and intentions would last, once we had left the scene.

## SUNDAY:

We had coffee with our hosts and then the four of us took a walk up and down the street to take photos of the pretty houses and the magnificent flowers and trees, and of each other.

At 12:30 p.m. we loaded our packed bags into Giorgio's car and went to a big hotel on the beach, for a lunch given in our honor by Sr. Leo. A musical group played some Spanish songs, startling Shura, who realized that he could now tell the difference between Portuguese and Spanish, which he couldn't have done the week before. The musicians wore the kind of shirts I had expected to see all over Rio, and hadn't: colorful ones. These ones were bright red, with ruffles, embroidered in white. It turned out that all the music men were from Paraguay.

A fast-moving storm came on-shore, scattering Sunday strollers right and left on the tiled pavement and beach below.

A lawyer named Sr. Paro, who spoke no English, came over to us with Giorgio by his side to interpret. He was a stocky man with black hair turning grey at the sides, and a round face that showed both toughness and humor. He told Shura, through Giorgio, that he was extending to us an invitation to come down and stay with him in Manaus, on the Amazon River, for one week, sometime next year. He said, "I have much information on the use of the ayahuasca among the Indians in the forest, and I will take you to a ceremony so that you can see for yourself."

Shura stood up and shook the lawyer's hand. "We would be honored to have such an experience, Senhor. We are very grateful for the opportunity, and we look forward to hearing from you next year. Thank you very much for your kindness."

They bowed to each other, and Sr. Paro returned to his seat, Giorgio at his side.

After lunch, Dr. Hector informed us that Leo would drive us to the airport, and we would be on our way home.

My notes for that day include this:

"I had a dream last night of a big, big yellow tiger without stripes, asleep on the living room floor, his coat ragged and full of little pieces of white carpet fluff, his paws clutching a long pillow covered in faded blue cotton. Happy sleeping tiger. I thought, he needs brushing, but how does one safely groom a tiger, even if it's a pet? Occurred to me that I hadn't fed him for days. What was he eating? Ah hah — the leftover cat food (our cats at home were fed a lot of dry cat food while we were away).

"Okay. I suspect the tiger is the Brazil Caper, with all the doubts and suspicions which we had attached to it, (about the Brazilian drug laws,

for instance, which were never fully explained, and the MDMA clinic, which might or might not ever come to be), which is now a happy, sleeping tiger who presents no problems, except that he is a bit dusty and needs brushing — but not now — and can be left in peace for the moment."

After a last go-round of hugs, we took off for the airport with Leo. When we arrived, he greeted a portly person with half his face showing signs of stroke. The man, we were told, managed to smooth the way of Leo every month or so, when he flew to various places around the world, and was given a tip of some kind. Leo asked him to attend to us, and told us to follow the man's lead. We found ourselves being pulled over into the First Class line, even though our tickets were for Business Class. Portly Person took our passports and the money for boarding passes and went ahead to take care of things. There were several people around the airport (Leo had told us) who specialized in doing just this sort of thing for people who could pay for the service. This one was pretty damned good. For a while, our new First Class seats were a half-plane apart, and the plane was oversold by 40 people — full load — yet somehow, he managed (after showing us to the VIP Lounge) to get us places only one seat apart. (On the plane, this resolved itself immediately, when the person who sat between us agreed to move, so we were finally seated side by side.)

We kept saying things to each other like, "I can't believe this whole trip!!" and from Shura, "Wait until I remark casually to Patrick (a good friend, an ethnobotanist, who was fascinated by the shamanic use of visionary plants) that we've been invited to explore the Amazon area by a lawyer who lives there and knows all about ayahuasca and is going to take us to a ceremony!"

"We'd better leave out the fact that the lawyer can't speak word One of English," I laughed.

We talked about the prospect of — next year — seeing the Orinoco River, which Shura said he'd always wanted to see; I reminded him that it was the favorite haunt of the piranha, but he wasn't fazed.

(I should add here that the Amazon trip hasn't yet taken place and perhaps never will.)

As we began to settle down, Shura sighed, "I wonder if that clinic will ever see the light of day."

"Somehow, I doubt it," I replied, "But, you know, maybe we'll be surprised, and the whole thing will actually happen. Giorgio and company really seem to want it; it's just that — well —"

"Things have a way of not quite getting done, in the Third World," finished Shura.

"Something like that," I shrugged a Brazilian shrug.

In Miami, we took our reserved room at the airport hotel again and

slept like babes for a few hours, before the continuation of the flight to San Francisco. The TV in the room remained dark. I hadn't seen American television for 12 days, but the U.S. was apparently still around; everything else could wait until we got home.

My notes read: "From South America, the U.S. looks too powerful, too Big Brother, too willing to push other countries to do what it wants, too paranoid and dictatorial. However, it's no different, I suppose, from any other nation in a position of power. There is no such thing as a good, kind or altruistic country with a lot of power. Countries get nicer as they lose influence, when they have to sit back and watch and adapt and stay out of the way of whichever nations happen to be filling the roles of Big Boys at the time.

"In Rio, we were warned to be careful about guarding our pockets and purses on the street, but I noted with some amusement that the first thing I did, after we'd collected our suitcases in the San Francisco Airport, was to tie the top bags to each other and to the baggage cart, lest somebody run by and snatch, as tends to happen in the U.S.

"The Brazilians are aware of having parasites in their government who milk the economy and the people, and the men who run for high office do so on the one major promise of stopping corruption. But here in the good old U.S. of America, we are riddled with corruption, too, and anyone with any intelligence knows it.

"I have now — as does Shura — a different view of what it means to be Third World. For instance, the word 'inflation' will never be a dry, abstract economic concept again, for me. But, above all, this trip confirmed and made very real to me the idea that the nations of this planet are tied together with bonds of tremendous number and complexity and no one of them can stand outside the mesh. What one country does eventually affects every other, for good or for evil; it's as true for nations as it is for individuals. End of philosophical observations for the moment."

It was so good to be home. And to have a home to return to.

#### AFTERTHOUGHTS:

The clinic, to this day, has not been built. No therapy has been done in Brazil with MDMA; at least, none that has resulted in scientific papers written and published. The good, kind people who welcomed us in Rio and opened their hearts to us, went on to other interesting pursuits. Some of them left Brazil, fearing economic collapse; others joined new groups of spiritual seekers; a few discovered new drugs, such as 2C-B, and continued trying to understand and improve themselves.

They are intensely interested in matters of the spirit, those gentle

people; I only wish that they, along with the rest of us who do our seeking with psychedelics, could find better ways of making changes in our world, starting with our immediate neighborhoods.

How many psychedelic users — in any country — actually give time to the local church soup kitchen, helping to feed the homeless and hungry? How many of us, having had the experience, under the influence of the visionary drugs, of seeing all human beings as incarnations of God, have gone down to the local hospital to give affection and a listening ear to lonely patients who need somebody to talk to? How many of us regularly visit a jail, to provide spiritual and emotional support to confused, damaged people who have grown up unloved, uneducated and unguided by their confused, damaged parents?

Have I done such kind and loving things for strangers? No, for the most part, I have not. Like most psychedelic seekers, I've been too busy with other matters. There are many excuses, many reasons, many good rationalizations. But the truth is, if we are to argue effectively for the value of these drugs and plants as spiritual openers, as keys to the doors of the soul, we must seriously consider how we should act, what we might do, and how we can manifest those values we like to think of as belonging to the psychedelic experience. Not just with our friends and families, but with our communities, with the rest of our tribe.

And what are those values? They are, of course, the same ones expressed by the great religions and spiritual teachings of the world. They are the values of compassion, tolerance, forgiveness and the search for truth, respect for living things and for the great mother-planet on whose skin we walk and build our homes.

There has been a reassuring step taken in Brazil, since we were there: the use of the consciousness-altering brew called ayahuasca has been officially approved for use by two native religions, so at least this visionary plant mixture has been acknowledged as having a valid use for spiritual experience and growth.

We still do not know anything substantial about Brazilian drug law, and our impression is that none of our Brazilian friends do, either. We do know that the United States does its best to force its destructive War on Drugs on all the countries of South America, and as long as our country gives out money, the Third World will go along with some of the First World's agenda in this, as well as many other areas.

With the worsening of the Brazilian economy, the rich people we had met prospered, for the most part. The dear cook and housekeeper, Corazon, had a baby boy and moved from one job to another. We were in touch with her for a while, but haven't heard from her for a long time now. She taught us much of value, during those ten days, and we hope she and

her child will be all right, in the confusion that is Brazil.

When I remember those ten days, among the images that present themselves are the faces of the chorus girls at Scala, the skewers of meat parading past us at Porxo, the wine-colored hearts hanging from the banana trees, the silent glory of the Southern Cross over the beach, and — above all — the radiant face of Corazon, that strange and unexpected day, her great dark eyes glowing with love and humor as she sat on the couch and looked at both of us, her slim hand firm and warm in mine, when she said, "It's all right. Everything is all right."

## CHAPTER 5 'SHROOMS

(Alice's voice)

---

From my notes:

"1.5 Grams for each of us, of the type known as *psilocybe cubensis*, mixed with a few bits of another type, all crushed and eaten raw, at around 6:00 p.m. Taste was pleasant.

First effects felt at 10 minutes after eating the little devils. Shortly after that, the world erupted into patterns. Patterns over everything. They seemed to fill all the space between me and my surroundings. The most prevalent design was that of a sort of squarish amoeba with a central black dot, like a nucleus, repeated endlessly and in three dimensions. Actually, it began to look most of all like chickenwire, with a small black dot in the middle of each square. In three dimensions.

At this point, quarter to 8:00 p.m., we've plateau'd, I at plus three and Shura at around plus two (he speculates that an experiment two days ago probably softened his response).

I'm sitting at the computer, determined to get a head start on my notes, but it's getting increasingly difficult.

Well! I wanted a really intense psychedelic experience to write about, and here it is. Thank God we didn't take more. One and a half grams is quite enough to deal with."

---



I sat there, trying to see the room through the forest of lines and dots and bands of musty reds and greens. The world surrounding me had become strange, almost alien, and I had the sense of a personality present, and it wasn't particularly friendly. It felt unloving, emotionally cool, and it had a sense of humor which was not particularly kind.

I reminded myself, "This personality I'm feeling is my own projection. Necessary to own it. It's all me. Like it or not, it's me."

I squinted at the computer keyboard, did my best to focus, and managed to get out of Xtree (Hooray!) and back into WordStar. I opened a new file called 'shrooms, and typed in the date at the top of the blank page in the upper right-hand corner, but couldn't go any further. The keyboard had become impossible to see through the clusters of colored patterns imposed on it, and the part of me that gives words to things, and conceptualizes, was losing ground to another part which wanted only to immerse itself in the three-dimensional pattern world, or at least to find out how to relate to it. So I thought: later; I'll write later. No can do right now.

I went to the bedroom with my man. Everything was moving. The walls were moving, the sheets and blanket and pillows were full of moving chickenwire amoebas and black dots, interwoven with streamers of dusky colors, red and yellow, black and green and orange.

Shura took off his light robe and got under the sheets. I sat on top of the blanket, cross-legged, and talked to him about what was happening, what I was seeing. I realized — and told him — that, for the moment, I had no interest whatsoever in making love; things would have to calm down quite a bit before my thoughts might tend to drift in that direction.

Most interesting and disturbing of all, I explained to Shura, was the fact that I was having a lot of trouble finding words to describe what I was seeing. I simply could not connect easily with my own usually excellent ability to verbalize. Left brain? Right brain? Whatever. I said it felt like a distinct interruption between the sides of the brain, and those two aspects of me.

He suggested, "Well, why don't you close your eyes, and try to tell me what you see inside your eyelids."

I straightened my back and closed my eyes. What I saw against a black background were short, curved pieces of what looked like ribbon candy floating, and on the top edge of each ribbon were evenly spaced little squares, three to a ribbon, and both the ribbons and squares were variously colored greyish white, dark red, green and yellow, and the entire scene struck me as ugly and boring, like a very bad-taste 1930's linoleum floor pattern. I opened my mouth to give the picture to Shura, and could not talk. The strangest part of it was — as I then discovered — that I had no difficulty using words for anything else; anything other than the images I was seeing

inside my head.

I said, "This is really weird; I can't describe it!"

Shura, quite understandably, misunderstood. He asked, very gently, "Are we talking ineffable, here? Is that what you mean?"

"No! Anything BUT ineffable! It's boring, uninspiring and painfully ordinary, but I simply cannot apply words to it; there's a total disconnect as soon as I try!"

"Well," he said, his voice warm and reassuring, "Stop trying and just let yourself experience for now. The words will come back."

"I know, I know; it's just so bloody ANNOYING, to be able to talk about anything else, but not be able to describe anything I see!"

I uncured myself and lay down on my pillow, beside Shura.

*There's a part of me that's sort of wanting to float in the world of the images. It's kind of an ego-less feeling. That part doesn't care about getting control of this situation; it would just as soon wander around and — as Shura says — simply experience. The other part of me is really determined to get control, and it's pretty damned mad at not being able to do what it wants with words, especially. And I don't know which part to go with. Except that I don't have much choice, because there's this weird disconnect. I wonder if the two sides of my brain really are separated in some way!*

It occurred to me to try an experiment in control. I asked myself (speaking out loud all the time to Shura) whether, in case of a real-life emergency, I could — in the words he would use — screw myself down, back to baseline, in order to cope. It was instantly possible to do so. No problema. At least, not if I took it one moment at a time.

After a while, I found that my sense of Self, of being centered, was gradually increasing. And with it came an increase in fascination with whatever this interior world, this place, was. So far, I couldn't see what could be learned from it. The patterns were only the surface. Beneath all that was a state of being/known/seeing which was not to my liking.

*Why do I dislike it? Because it lacks most of the familiar emotions and feelings I'm used to. It's a place of strangeness for me. Alien.*

I searched the air above me. The patterns were still there, moving continuously between me and the ceiling.

*Which means I have to explore it, learn it, own whatever aspect of myself it represents. I wonder if it's just my Observer?*

There was music on the radio, and interestingly enough, I heard it without any particular increase of understanding or emotional relationship, as usually happens with other psychedelics. In this state, it was music and nice enough, but it had nothing to do with everything else that was going on. It was beside the point.

I looked at my beloved's face and saw it colored in mottled oranges,

yellows and browns. Not beautiful, but certainly earthy, and I'd seen that kind of skin coloring before, during previous mushroom experiments.

*My face probably looks all mottled to him, too.*

Shura remarked, "It's Beethoven; are you comfortable with it?"

I nodded, "It really doesn't matter, but it's fine. And familiar."

But, even as I said it, I realized that I was no longer looking for anchors like familiar music, because I had begun to be more aware of the essential anchor within myself, and was very slowly beginning to feel less pushed at by the chickenwire squares and the restless streams of color, and increasingly stronger in my core.

I looked over at Shura. He was still my other Me, my essential person, skin of my skin and blood of my blood. There was no rush of emotion about him, just instant acknowledgement of who he was and what we were to each other.

I turned back to search the patterns filling the air above the bed, trying to feel out the nature of whatever form of consciousness was present. All I could sense was a mind whose view of the world with its contradictions and chaos was matter-of-fact; there was an attitude of "That's the way it is; you gain nothing by resisting or complaining; accept it." It wasn't unkind; just calm and cool, down-to-earth.

*Oh, yes. I know that one. That's just a version of my own Observer again. I'm projecting it onto something "out there," but it's part of my own psyche, like it or not.*

I lay on my back, gazing up at the frustrating tangle of lines and dots between me and the ceiling, wondering what in heaven I was supposed to do with any of it. I had recognized the projection of what I called my Observer, but beyond that, of what use was it?

*Owning it all as part of myself makes my sense of control better, but it doesn't do much to answer the question which continues to nag: what is this aspect of my mind? Is it also an aspect of the universal mind? Yes, of course. So I'm back in the old loop again. Whatever the universal consciousness is, our own is a mirror of it. The part of ourselves which we (most of us) prefer, feel comfortable with — the affectionate, loving, caring part — is balanced by other parts, including the one which emerged in this experience, which is characterized by cool knowing, acceptance, lack of emotional warmth or response. It isn't hostile to such feelings, but it isn't involved with them. And of course this describes my Observer, because its function is to observe and learn.*

We lay side by side, Shura and I, holding hands, listening now to one of my favorite pieces of music, Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances. The ceiling was still busy with slightly pulsing amoeba squares and their black nuclei, but I wasn't trying to learn anything from them any more.

Suddenly, I remembered something that had disturbed me the day

before, and told Shura. I said, "I'm thinking about a dream I rediscovered on the computer. I'd written it down very carefully a long time ago, and as I read it over, I couldn't recall having had the dream at all. It was really strange, not being able to remember even a trace of it. It was like reading a stranger's account. It bothered me. And just now, it came to me that, since the dream had been totally understood at the time, and had been written down, there was no further need for me to remember the actual dreaming of it."

Shura prompted me, "What was it about?"

I summarized, "You were in it, and my children, and we were all interchangeable; we were all — we were each other. All of us were in this place, and there was a tremendous energy field; I mean, we *were* an energy field. A good dream. Actually, I think you'd call it a Samadhi dream, a bliss state."

We made some moves toward lovemaking, but my efforts were half-hearted, and I finally told Shura there was too much distraction going on, "I don't think I can focus enough, honey. Maybe later."

He pulled my head over to his shoulder, reassuring me, "You go with your instincts, babe. Just keep me abreast of what's happening."

It occurred to me, finally, to ask him what he was experiencing. He hesitated, then admitted, "I'm enjoying the music and I'm in a good place, but — believe it or not — I've had no visual effects whatsoever."

I raised my head and peered at him through mottled veils of color — mostly brown and dark red, at that point — and said, "Good grief, Charlie Brown; no visuals at ALL?"

He chuckled and shook his head, "I should have expected it, after the experiment earlier this week. It's okay, though. You seem to be having enough visuals for both of us!"

After cuddling beside him for some time, I told him I wanted to try writing again, if he didn't mind. He said, "Sure. Give it a go. I'm going to stay here awhile and listen to the music."

Walking down the hall towards the dining room, I realized how selfish I was being, how focused on my own experience, and wondered why I wasn't more empathetic with Shura. What was even more interesting was that my self-absorption didn't particularly trouble me.

*I don't think it would be right for me to pretend feelings that aren't genuine; he knows I love him; he knows I'm usually tuned into him. This is just the way it's going for me, this time, and I have to follow my instincts and not put on any kind of act; that would be insulting to him, a betrayal.*

This time, when I sat down at my computer, the keyboard was clearly visible and when I began describing the formerly undescribable, it was obvious that the separation within my mind which had so annoyed me

earlier — the inability to apply words to what was being directly experienced — had changed. I was in charge again; I could use words to do anything I wanted. On the other hand, the patterns which had filled the air everywhere I looked, only half an hour ago, had faded. In fact, they were almost entirely gone. So there was nothing in the way of interior images for me to deal with anymore.

At around 1:30 a.m., we went back to the bedroom. Love-making flowed easily, but we couldn't manage orgasm, either of us. There was no distraction for me, this time; the visuals had disappeared. The music was a lovely Schumann thing we'd both known from childhood, and we hummed together through familiar passages. But still, I was aware of the fact that a large part of my mental and emotional focus was somewhere other than below my waist.

---

From my notes the next day:

"Sleep was pleasant, with dreams that were clear and clean in color, amusing and friendly. Completely unlike my usual post-2C-B dreams, which tend to be shallow, annoying and very repetitive.

After sleeping for a long time, during the entire next day I had energy and a quiet, calm pleasantness. No need for a nap, as after 2C-B. Wanted to write, looked forward to cooking, enjoyed whatever I was doing. Most unusual.

Bewildering experience, and I want to explore a different mushroom next time, at perhaps the same level, and see what comes up. This was difficult and frustrating, but it was also challenging, and in a strange way, rewarding. Much to learn."

---

Some time later, I was at a pot-luck dinner in a friend's house, with about forty members of what we call the Network — people interested in exploration of the human mind — and I was on the back deck, smoking and sipping a fruit drink. I was watching Shura through the big kitchen window as he gestured dramatically, engaged in intense conversation with a young blond man. I love watching him; with his enthusiasm, his pleasure in ideas, he is an 18 year-old soul radiating life in a 69 year-old body.

A friend of mine came onto the deck and headed toward where I was sitting at a big glass-topped patio table. She gave my shoulders a hug as she passed behind me. It was Sarah Vincent, another young soul in a middle-aged body, whose book on telepathy experiments had just been published.

Sarah was a completely extraordinary person. She'd been through marriage, divorce, motherhood, loss and triumph, and even now, in her sixties, with a full head of grey curls, she was usually involved in an affair, often with a man quite a bit younger than she. With her sharply intelligent eyes and lovely, animated face, she had the presence of a shaman and the warmth of an empathetic mother, and I always learned something from her. Sarah had been involved in the psychedelic movement from the beginning, and her fascination with the way the mind works, stimulated by what she had seen and experienced of the effects of psychedelic drugs, had led her to become involved in the study of brain waves and telepathy.

After we'd talked for a while about her book and the work that had gone into it, it occurred to me to ask Sarah if she could possibly help me understand the aspect of my mushroom experiment that had interested — and annoyed — me most: my inability, at the height of the effects, to describe what I was seeing.

"I could describe anything else, I could talk about anything else; it was just when I tried to apply words to whatever I was looking at, the patterns, the visuals, even the eyes-closed pictures — which were totally boring — I became wordless. Later on, as the images were beginning to fade, I could use words again and describe everything, no problem. But why that split, earlier?"

"The patterns, what were they like?" asked Sarah.

"Sort of tracteries — no, not tracteries; they were kind of like chicken-wire fencing, but the spaces weren't square, they were more like amoebas, and in the center of each space was a black dot, like the dark center of an amoeba. That's about as close as I can get."

"Flat or dimensional?"

"All the space around me was filled with them, with this stuff, you know, in three dimensions; I mean, the air was thick with them, everywhere I looked."

"Right, right."

"And everything was very dark — dark colors. It was not the most pleasant experience I've ever had, but — but the important thing was the inability to verbalize. I could tell Shura anything else, but I couldn't say a word about whatever I was seeing, and I thought that maybe there was some kind of — it felt to me as if there was a separation of parts of my brain, you know?"

"Yes, there is that," said Sarah, and took a drink from her glass.

"There is?"

*Surprise, surprise — does she really mean that?*

I asked, "Do you have any idea what happens — when everything you're looking at is perfectly simple, but you can't use the part of your mind — your brain — that finds words? And how come I could talk about anything else?"

"Well, focus of attention is important in this," said Sarah. "So often, when I want to say somebody's name, I will see that person; I will hear her talk; I will remember how she smells and how she's dressed. But I can't think of her name for anything!"

"Yes — "

"And part of that's because I am used to using the visual system as my dominant cognitive process, and it's not necessarily connected to the verbal. The stronger the visual, the less likely I will be able to name it."

"Yeah, yeah — "

"And there comes a separation —," she closed her eyes as if to see better, "Even in our telepathic work, a person might draw one picture and give a different verbal report."

*She must mean when they're doing remote-viewing experiments.*

"And while one was attempting to receive, sometimes the picture would be right, and the words unrelated, and sometimes the words would be right and the picture unrelated."

"That's weird!"

"It is weird," she agreed, laughing, "And it's one of the things I want to go over with you. The verbal system can be quite independent of the visual system. There are people who use the verbal system most dominantly in their thinking processes, you know, and they'll often do word puns and you know, I'll miss those puns, because while they're talking, I'm visualizing — "

"Yes."

" — and all of a sudden, here comes this word pun, and I have to stop and shift thinking gears, 'Oh, yes, that must be a joke,' and it's just such a blank wall for me, at first — a non sequitur — because my dominant cognitive process is not verbal, but visual. So the punsters laugh about it, because I'm so slow at getting jokes, but it's because I'm not using that part of my brain in the same way."

"And the kind of visions that I'm describing — "I began.

"It's like you're projecting from the inside out. You're projecting onto the surface something that's going on in your visual processes, and if they're really, really dominant, they're not connected to the verbal, so you wouldn't be able to talk about them at the same time."

"But why could I — uh — why was I able to talk about anything else?"

"Because that's not the same process; you can — you see, you simply haven't made a verbal connection — "

"To what's going on visually," I finished.

*I could talk to Shura because it wasn't about things I was seeing, it was about ideas and feelings, nothing being visually experienced.*

Sarah went on, "You know, one of the difficulties in learning visual thinking, if you're not a visual thinker — "

"Yeah — "

" — you know, somebody's painting something, and they go —," she gestured in the air with an imaginary paintbrush, making little ch-ch-ch sounds to accompany the stabs of the brush," — and the other person says, 'What's that?' because they have to put words to it — "

"Yes," I said.

" — because it has to be a leaf, or it has to be a — a SOMething, right?"

"You have to train them on Clyfford Still's paintings," I said, and was rewarded by Sarah's burst of laughter. She obviously knew Clyfford Still's work.

"If you're thinking in color," she said, "If your color-intelligence and your shape-intelligence are functioning, you don't need to have words for things at all."

"Ah."

Sarah continued, "If you're looking for Marianne Street, and you find Marine Street, you'll probably make the turn before you realize it was wrong, because you looked at the first letters and then you filled in what you expected to find — "

"Uh-huh!"

"So there's that — " Sarah was picking her words carefully, I thought, and wondered if she was sensing my confusion," — that mixup in the area of intention."

"Intention," I repeated, "Meaning focus?"

"Well, like, you know, everything has to go through the thalamus — except smell — to get to the cortex, and the thalamus is the area of intention, as well as a switchboard; here it is, right here, in the center — half way between your eyes and the back of your head, half way between your ears, the switchboard —," she demonstrated with a finger to her head," — and sometimes there'll be synaesthesia, where you smell sounds —," she illustrated with interweaving fingers, as I nodded enthusiastically, smiling because synaesthesia is one of my favorite experiences in the world.

" — and hear colors and that sort of thing. There's a whole section



of the Tibetan Book of the Dead that Tim Leary and others translated; do you have that book around? They called it The Psychedelic Experience."

"The Tibetan Book of the Dead? Yes. I don't know exactly where in the house it is, but we do have it."

"Well, the way Leary and Alpert and Metzner translated that, it's one of the Bardos. When you see all these patterns and shapes and you're totally involved in these patterns and shapes, then that's one of the places you can go —"

I nodded.

"— and it's usually — ah — it's not a very advanced level, necessarily, and you may not even appreciate it, or like it."

"I didn't."

I thought for a moment, then added, "By the way, Sarah, these floating chickenwire sorts of things are familiar; I've seen them before. It wasn't that they were brand new or anything; they're like the snakeskin patterns, you know, that you can get with most real psychedelics."

"Yes," said Sarah, "We all know that one."

"So these amoeba kind of shapes — you've seen them?"

"I've seen something like it, yes. There are energy patterns around everything, and there are sort of these little transparent thingies —"

"Uh-huh."

"— and part of what you're seeing is from your pre-conscious, part is what you pick up from your environment, and part of what you're seeing is the projection of your rods and cones, and those are the patterns they make."

*Rods and cones, for Pete's sake!*

She sat back and smiled at me, "About four years ago, when I was teaching students who were eager to experience mind games, I used an old 16 millimeter projector as a mild strobe light in which the flicker rate could be changed to different frequencies to match the natural brainwaves. The old movies ran at 18 frames per second, which was fast enough for us to see the separate images as one image continuously moving. But at 13 frames per second, my students drew pictures of interference waveform patterns."

*Interference waveform — wonder what that looks like?*

"At around 6 to 10 frames per second —" continued Sarah, now completely caught up in her subject, eyes shining with pleasure and excitement, "— which matches the frequencies of the theta and alpha brainwave range — the majority of the students drew pictures of mandala patterns with polka-dots. They described the patterns as constantly moving, red to green, or red-orange to blue in opposite directions. You see, when you are sending a signal to the eye at the rate it 'sees' it, then you're looking at what you are looking *with*. I've collected about a hundred of these

drawings, so you know I've studied the results."

"Yeah," I said softly, with just a tiny hesitation, letting her know I needed more explanation — just a bit more.

"In other words," said Sarah, slowing down slightly, "If you take a projector and project its own plain light on a wall, and then you close down the opening for the light, what you will see on the wall is the filament of the projector lamp itself! When you shine a light in somebody's eyes at the same rate as the brainwave of the visual cortex, it's like looking at the projector filament; the rods and cones are projected into the flickering light. Sometimes thought forms are projected into the middle of this as well."

*What? Thought forms?*

But Sarah was continuing, "The focus in the visual system becomes so intense that the pathways become dominant and the verbal system can seem to be unconnected to what you are seeing. Flickering lights are not the only way to stimulate this process; mind chemistry can also trigger strange activity of the visuals, as you know."

"Ah, yes!"

"So it's — part of what you're seeing may be related to the energy of the person you're looking at, and part of it is what you're looking with. It's a very, very primary state of vision."

"Yes, yes, right."

"And it's a very creative state of vision. Now, some of the other kinds of patterns that sort of dominate and seem to be meaningless, that's one of the Bardo's, and you can get stuck in it for a while."

"You used the word, 'creative,' though," I prompted, "Is it creative because it's down well beneath the intellect, and it's more open to the unconscious, so things can flow more freely?"

"Yes, that's one way of saying it; your pre-conscious is influencing what you're seeing, as well as the influences of the environment that's around you."

"Okay."

Sarah drank from her glass, then put it down and smiled at me, "One of the reasons I like to study telepathic imagery is because we are really scratching the surface of that creative space, and that brings deeper thoughts into conscious focus. I've collected over hundreds of telepathy trials between couples who just wanted to try to improve their communication with each other. They often find that the inner thoughts which they haven't confided to each other yet — or perhaps haven't admitted to themselves — are brought right up to the surface. The intelligence of the visual system is often more direct in exposing pre-conscious issues than the verbal system is."

"Well, now, with the business of — "I stumbled, "If you really

wanted to, could you — by doing 'shrooms often enough, could you learn to translate what you're seeing and experiencing into the verbal, or do you just have to learn to wait until later, when the words can be found easily?"

"Ah —" began Sarah, but I interrupted.

"Is there any *point* in trying to learn to bring them — "

"To do it simultaneously? I don't think so. The non-verbal realms are their own reward."

"Okay, so it's more a matter of — it's a control issue."

"But you can recall it later on, just as you've done for me."

"Yes, oh yes, easily," I agreed.

"You know, if you're totally focused on making love, for example, you're not writing poetry."

"Yeah."

"That comes later," she chuckled, "And if you're totally focused on synchronizing your brain waves with somebody, then that's all you're doing and, like, if you do something else, you're not synchronizing anymore. If you talk about it, you've shifted the whole EEG, and you're no longer doing what you started out to do."

"So there really is no point to it."

"Not much. In hypnosis, I'll take a person into a deep space, watch the face very carefully, so I know when they're visualizing, I know if they've run into an emotional thing — "

I nodded firmly. I was remembering my own experience as a therapist, and how much I had learned from watching patients as they lay on the couch, dropping into the trance state as they'd been taught to do.

Sarah was saying, " — and at a certain point, I'll ask them to verbalize, in order to stabilize the memory for later, and to integrate the mental functions. But during the experience, there has to be a whole period of time when they're not verbalizing, because they have to be experiencing!"

I said, "Okay. I see what you mean. Trying to force verbalization blocks me from really experiencing, and there's nothing to be gained by all that effort, considering the fact that — eventually — the verbal ability returns, good as new."

Sarah reached across the table and patted my hand, "That's the way I see it, yes."

"Thanks, honey," I said, "I needed to find a different way of thinking about something I had assumed was a problem, and you've given it to me."

"You're welcome," she laughed, and we went on to talk about other things.

Thanks to Sarah, I've learned not to try to control experiences like

these, but to go with what's being presented. I'm still not sure how to avoid being stuck in any of what the Buddhists call the Bardo's, which are usually described as being states through which a soul journeys after the body's death. The images in the Bardo's range from cartoon-like, silly figures without apparent meaning or depth, to demons and monsters which mirror the soul's unresolved dark side. I've always believed that what one is supposed to do in the Bardo's (whether one is a newly released soul or a psychedelic traveler) is confront and acknowledge these reflections of one's unconscious self, then move on.

But what in heaven's name could I possibly have done with floating bits of musty ribbon candy? Just wait it all out, probably, with patience and resignation. After all, everything transforms, if you give it enough time.

When I next see Sarah, I'll ask.

## CHAPTER 6. PANSOPH-2

(Shura's voice)

I have never been particularly satisfied with my dream life. Not that it was uninteresting, it is just that I don't remember much of it. Oh yes, I have been told that if I were to ask myself immediately on awakening, "What were you dreaming?" I would be able to recall a lot of it. This is nothing more than exchanging one problem for another, since I can never remember to ask myself that question when I wake up.

There is one personal dream property of which I am pretty confident, however. I do not dream in color. When there is color called for by the plot, so to speak, it is intellectually supplied. Walk on the green light. I watch the light change, and I know that this is now the green light, and I walk. But the actual light itself is in shades of gray. Once in a long while something will colorize the scene, such as a field of flowers actually being yellow spots on a grey landscape, and I am awake immediately. It is as if I weren't allowed that particular modality.

An exception to the amnesia pattern occurred on the night following a group experiment with a, O-DMT. In the next day's reports, two of the participants mentioned having nightmares about cataclysmic events, with buildings toppling and people in agony. I can identify with these comments, since that very night I too had a most remarkable dream. And, completely unexpectedly, when I awoke I remembered the entire story with total clarity. This, I said to myself, will never be forgotten. It was structured like a movie script, with scenes all set and dialogue in place. Now, some fifteen years later, I am able to write it up from that still vivid memory. Even to the terrible pun built into the title, BARE-ASS as a play on the vehicle's name: PanSoph-2, or pants-off, too. Here is the story which, I note, might also be seen as a nightmare and even cataclysmic. But I found it totally entertaining. And it was, incidently, in black and white.

## BARE-ASS: A STORY ABOUT INFORMATION

## TUESDAY: A DAY OF CURIOSITY

The sky was an incredible expanse of black, peppered with countless stars, scattered as if by some random process. Some looked like smudges; perhaps these were galaxies. Others were individuals and kept to themselves. None of the constellations that had been the sky-maps of generations of humans could be identified; the stars were surely still there somewhere, but the viewing perspective was new and always changing.

Willard was the son of the daughter of one of the original crew of the ship PanSoph 2. That launch had been 62 years ago, and his grandmother Jane Willard Robertson was no more than a myth and a photograph on his desk. How strange and unnecessary, to have three names when you were, after all, just one person.

This had been his duty day for search and report. He had completed the review of the recordings of possible responses from that morning's one hour beacon probe and it had been (as it had always been before and as it would probably be forever on) completely negative. So he drifted to the after lounge and settled back into the comfortable viewing chair. He brought the telescope view onto the screen, and reflected that one of these millions of points of light was the source of his blood line and the magical start of his life process, a source that he could never hope to see in reality. It was an unresolvable sadness that always touched him at this moment.

He covered the screen with the heliospectroscopic filter and quickly located the wanted pin-point dot, very near to the cross-hairs as always, that stayed lighted as all the others went dark. That was earth's sun; that was his origin.

He made the manual changes to bring the earth's sun exactly to the center, and carefully recorded the micrometer values used so that the earth-people could continue calculating the gravitational discontinuities that had introduced these errors. With the fine focusing optics moved into place, the recentering of the sun's dot provided the corresponding corrections of the positioning of the radio transceiver antenna, so that the link report could be made.

A very strange and sterile world it was for Willard, but he could not see it that way, for this world had been his entire life. He had been born here on the ship a couple of earth-decades ago, and had gone through the ritual vasectomy, clock-training, maternal linking and memory challenges. He was now one of the four navigators, each having one day on and three off, and all of them sharing the responsibilities of knowing where they were and where they were going. And why? In two years young Broderick would

come of age and they would be back to a full complement of five again. And if Sara birthed a boy, there would be a sixth as backup in another couple of decades.

Once the locks were set on the radio antenna, he opened the receiving circuit for the earth message. It started precisely on time, at the calculated 14:22.37 on his watch and also, of course, in the small box in the lower right-hand corner of his start screen. He acknowledged the initial challenge with the completely familiar password, and saw the several lines of text, the news of the rest of the human race there on earth, unfold across the bottom of the screen. Another political challenge to the rulers of Serbia, a new approach proposed to the study of environmental changes, and the discovery of a new viral factor in a disease thought to be genetic. He would enter these bits of information into the transient encyclopedia; nothing, of course, was allowed to go into the basement computer.

He dumped the screen, switched to transmit, and sent the small fine-focusing corrections that he had made to center the sun, so that the people back there would be able to further map the small gravitational deflections the ship was experiencing in its present location. These calculations would take only a few minutes once the information got back there, but it would be more than three years for the signal to make the trip from PanSoph-2 to earth.

What Willard could not know was the tragic condition of life on earth, the changes and distortions that had occurred during the space ship's travels. The news messages were less than candid, as they were always framed in a structure which would use concepts that the crew could understand. The last living link with life other than the ship he had always known as his home, was the Mother Bess who had told unbelievable stories of her childhood. Although she was now dead, many of the tapes still existed, having been rerecorded many times. And the basement memory was replete with an overwhelming quantity of history, which could be copied and read at leisure. But it was, of course, current only at the time of their launch, many years ago. He was aware that the first of these information ships, PanSoph itself, had apparently been lost. At least its fate was unknown. That is why the daily link with the current ship #2 had been invoked as a fixed ritual.

It was the information in the basement that was, after all, the purpose of the ship and the sole reason for its existence. In this basement was a massive computer memory, with the entire inventory of factual knowledge, the history of the planet Earth, all scientific discovery and invention, as well as the complete art, music and writing of the human species. It was there in its entirety, guaranteed to be intact, potentially the remaining record of the human animal if earth were to be lost. Any amount

of it could be decompiled and copied, and brought up by being transferred to the ship's top computer, its working computer, and used or enjoyed, then discarded. But it was one of the inflexible operational rules that nothing new should ever be sent down. More than a rule, this was sacred dogma. The basement memory bank was a record of earth as of the day of departure, and it must remain unchanged. It was a law that was not to be violated.

Just as the search for replies to the hour's beacon transmission was part of the day's routine (as was the focus and transmission to earth) so was the requirement that time be spent in some learning discipline to occupy the duty day. Willard was content in that he had completed his chores here in communication, and he knew that the pregnant Sara was busy in house-keeping. All the others were in suspension for the day. He made a quick run-down of all the control lights — gyro, CO<sub>2</sub> reducer, thrust pile, power to the basement memory and the sperm bank, delay tapes to the beacon probes — everything was green and quiet. So Willard relaxed and pursued his personal learning discipline, playing with pi in multidimensional matrices.

His current passion was to express pi in some even-numbered modulus and explore some form of walk in a dimensional system of half that number, basing everything on the actual value of pi. He had called up from the basement into the top computer (the encyclopedia, as they commonly called it) the value of pi that had been stored there as a quantum fact, known with complete accuracy to almost 10 to the 10th places. Then he manipulated it into modulo six. A magnificent collection of naughts and ones and twos and threes and fours and fives, all tumbling after one another in seemingly random patterns, but so exquisitely not-at-all random. Wherever he stopped, the next number was unknown to him, but he realized that by simply invoking any of several power series expressions, the next digit would be exposed. What it would be was totally unpredictable, but absolutely preordained. An eerie concept, the revealing of each new digit totally unknown to him, yet absolutely fixed in the infinite nature of things.

It was a moment of carelessness, of inattention, but a moment that would change the order of things in unexpected ways. Willard secured his day's number theory games by returning his slightly expanded value of pi to memory. It should have been discarded from top memory, or put into a personal folder there, as it now contained new information, but he had left the coding on it that identified it as galactic knowledge, and as such it was allowed back into basement memory. A fundamental rule had been violated.

#### WEDNESDAY: A DAY OF INEXACTNESS.

It was Charles the next day who conducted the beacon probes and



went through the ritual (and again futile) search for replies. From the after lounge he called up the telescope projection and it was when he made the routine time check that the first hint was seen of something being amiss. The time on the screen was at the lower right, as always, but when he glanced at his watch, there was a three second discrepancy. He was fast! He queried the ship's computer; it was absolutely consistent with what he saw on the screen. He checked the battery of his watch; it had full power. So he touched it to the transfer plate of the terminal and reset it. His time was now corrected and there was, of course, agreement. Nonetheless he noted the event in the ship's log.

Receiving time for the day was set at the usual increment of advance, and was due for 14:23.37. The thought passed fleetingly through Charles' mind, should that time have been from his watch, or from the ship's computer? Well, they were now both the same, and of course the computer had to be correct. He filled the screen with the field that carried the earth's sun and, for the first time in his life, saw that none of the several stars in the center of the monitor were at all close to the cross hairs. Apparently some other error had entered the picture. The spectroscope filter quickly determined which of the several candidates was the proper sun, but it was much further off to the right than he had ever seen it before. Perhaps they were entering the gravitational field of some massive invisible body. He swung the field appropriately to bring the sun to the cross-hairs, but he carefully recorded the unusually large micrometer and vernier entries that were needed. He locked the scope, and as soon as the radio antennas had matched these bearings, he locked them as well.

The receiver was on, and he had yet another surprise. The earth message that was to be printed across the bottom of the screen had already started. Some of it had already been lost. At the end of the receiving, he noted that the amount lost was perhaps several seconds. With a shock he realized that it had not been his watch but, rather, the ship's computer, that had been in error with that morning's time check. Switching to transmission mode, he dumped back to earth the macro with the vernier readings, and the usual negative findings from the morning beacon probe. After a moment's hesitation he decided not to mention the clock discrepancy. And also not to mention the unusual shift of real position, from calculated position, of the earth's sun image. He would work around a bit with it first, and if there was some new gravitational attraction that was influencing their trajectory, he would be able to analyze it in a less hurried manner, and make any needed heading changes using the ship's existing programs rather than waiting for years for suggestions from Earth.

What was amiss? The fact that he had indeed found the sun (he had received Earth's transmission after all) suggested to him that the most

rewarding first step would be to search out the clock mess-up. He brought up the exact time on the monitor from the ship's computer, and with his watch against the transfer plate, projected the exact time from it onto the screen as well. They were clearly printed one above the other, and again they did not show the same time. The watch was nearly a second fast. Again. Or the ship's computer was going slower yet. How could an entry into the gravitational field of some distant massive thing so dramatically influence the computer's timing crystal?

He went to the crew's suspension area, found Johnathan's bunk, moved his friend's arm out from under the covers, and carefully unstrapped his watch. Back at the main console, he projected its time onto the big monitor and, as he somehow knew it would be, the time was yet different from both his own watch and the ship's computer clock. The ship's clock was slowest, his own in-between, and Johnathan's the fastest. He went back to the suspension area and quickly gathered ten more watches, and brought them back and projected all of their times. Every one of them was absolutely identical, to a hundredth of a second. Identical to Johnathan's. It was his own that he had screwed up, in making those corrections needed to agree with the ship's top computer. The reference value in this computer was what was most certainly wrong.

What should he do? Try to reset the ship's clocks? That would be quite simple, but would simply hide the problem, not solve it. Run a system check on it; that would be a logical first step. The lines of verification rolled down the screen, but whereas under usual circumstances each line would compare exactly with its control form, Johnathan saw that there was not one, but two alerts. He had read about such things in the manuals, and knew the risks that can be associated with them, but in his entire life on the ship with his radio and navigation work he had never seen a true alert.

One was in the ship's top computer memory and the other, in the basement memory storage. That latter one could wait, as it clearly was not vital to the function of the ship. He thought about activating others in the crew and he knew he had to if this was a true emergency, but for the moment it just might be something related to a single failure, a failure of his personal watch, and he might be able to fix it himself. The first alert certainly made sense with the clock-watch discrepancy — there was a crystal failure in the primary chronometer. Thank goodness he had adjusted only his own watch to the faulted computer; the remaining watches all agreed with each other, and could serve as a reference for resetting things.

He logged deeper into the chronometer entry, to see just where the problem was located, and how he should go about repairing it. As more detailed screens came into view, it became apparent that the problem was not in the primary cesium oscillator, but in the program that translated its

primary signal to seconds, and thence to minutes, hours and days. The error was not one of equipment but of calculation. Apparently the mechanics of the clock were intact. However, there was no hint that any of the circuit boards or chips were faulted. Try a sequential voltage check. All test points gave values comfortably within the allowed ranges. The hardware seemed to be perfect. Try a dynamic test.

Charles entered a challenge equation, and after a period of time that was almost, but not quite, outside the allowed limit, the calculation answer finally appeared in the answer box. It was wrong.

Something was very much out of control. He went immediately to the crew's quarters, and set in motion the procedure that would bring them all to consciousness and sensibility within a few minutes.

#### THURSDAY: A DAY OF CHAOS

The entire crew was present, with the exception of the children and their nanny, and Jerome who had the beacon and transmission duty for the day. They sat around the large table in the central bulge. Hugo was the senior navigator and the leader of the discussion.

"Let me try to summarize where we are as of the moment. We have so far experienced four alerts in the top computer system; the clock is screwed up — that was the first problem spotted by Johnathan on his shift yesterday. And now faults appear to be present in some aspect of dead-reckoning, something in the Doppler analysis of the beacon responses, and something associated with the nuclear drive pile. Is this one thing wrong expressing itself in several ways, or is the whole ship falling apart all of a sudden?"

"Don't forget the alert from the basement system yesterday," added Charles.

"OK. Five alerts, then. What do they have in common?"

"They all involve calculations, maybe," suggested James.

"But calculations are basic activities of calculators. If the calculator is intact, the calculation gives the right answer." This, from Marie.

The comments flew in from all participants.

"But the answers are wrong."

"How do you know what the right answer is if the calculations are wrong? Maybe your 'right' answer is wrong."

"But they are inconsistent — calculate the same problem twice, and get two different answers."

"You haven't done that. You've compared the results with the published text."

"The watches are all consistent, except for Charles's. But they are

different from the top computer's time."

"And the difference is getting absurd."

The free-for-all was interrupted by the appearance of a very disturbed Jerome.

"I can't find the sun at all. Nothing in the entire field has the right spectrum. I missed the transmission schedule. I can't find it!"

Hugo snapped back: "How would you know the right spectrum, if it has to be calculated for checking, and our calculators are screwed up?"

A chill settled over the group, as it became apparent that something was very wrong, and the trusted tools for isolating the source of the wrongness might themselves be faulted.

"That's it," came the voice of Willard. "Every wrong calculation invokes a power series calculation for its success. Maybe something is out to lunch with the power series part of the computer?"

"Well, how can that idea be checked?" asked Hugo.

"I can do it immediately from a pi calculation. I have the power series, and the correct answer in my personal satchel in top memory."

"How do you know just what the correct answer would be?"

"I have the accurate value up from basement, accurate to a gillion places."

"Then give it a try."

Jerome interrupted. "Would a couple of you come and help me on the earth screen. Look over my shoulder and see if I'm missing something."

The group broke up. No one noticed the soft hissing sound that filled the ship. At least no one commented on it. Willard opened his personal address on the nearest monitor, and called up the current power series he was using for new values of pi. In a moment, the screen was filled with a myriad of zeros and ones.

"The last form I had was modulo six, so let me convert this." A couple of strokes more, and the screen was now filled with digits from zero to five.

"See, it's working fine," he said with some satisfaction.

"Is it the right answer?" asked Hugo.

"I'll make a subtraction check against the reference value." Another couple of strokes, but this time there was no change.

"My reference value is missing!"

"Did you erase it?"

"Of course not. I saved it."

"Where?"

"Right here in my ..." Willard stopped. A cloud went across his face. "Might it have been, somehow, saved to basement?"

Hugo immediately called up the system check screen, to look for

any alert messages. The rules for bringing up and using information from the basement were clearly stated. All knowledge was of one of three classes:

Galactic knowledge. This was universal fact, which would be accessible to any and all intelligences anywhere in the universe. Here were the physical Constants such as the speed of light and Planck's Constant. Here was the mass of the proton and the half-life of carbon-fourteen. On Arcturus 4B, as on earth, these numbers are identical. Such values went down to basement as class A information. They were uncensored and unrestricted, but they could only be entered with the quantum key. The value of pi was among these quantum facts.

Earth knowledge. Here were the facts that were uniquely those of earth. The physical scene, such as atmospheric oxygen concentration and the salinity of salt water. Chlorophyll and DNA. Other worlds might have, would most certainly have, similar numbers, but these were absolutely unique to earth, and reflected its evolutionary history. This material was factual, but not galactically universal. It was placed in the basement with the history key, and a copy could be brought up as wanted. It could never be changed from a distance. No alien intelligence could ever insert its own information, as there was no inherent truth in any alien numbers.

Human knowledge. This was the product of the intelligence of man. The history of the human animal, the writings of Shakespeare, the speeches of Cicero, the structures of psychoactive drugs, and the causes of depression. Again, initial information was put down with the mind key, but once there in basement, it was inviolate. If copies came up, they had to be kept in personal files or dumped.

The galaxy key, the history key, and the mind key. All had been used at the loading of the basement computer, the pan-sophistry repository of all human knowing, and all these keys remained on earth, so that this body of knowledge would be preserved intact for future scholars.

The hissing that seemed to come from everywhere was now quite a bit louder. Still, no one seemed to notice.

The checks that Hugo brought to the screen carried two alert messages. He opened immediately the basement alert that had been there from yesterday, but which had been totally ignored. It stated, quite simply:

"Unauthorized filing detected. System decompiling."

He clicked on the latter entry, and there appeared on the screen:

ALL DATA WILL BE DECOMPILED, MATERIALIZED, AND DUMPED

"What have we done here? Can this be stopped?"

The nanny from the nursery ran in, out of breath. "Sally has gone into what looks like a convulsion. Help me."

Johnathan ran out with her. Willard turned to Hugo, with a look of distress in his face. The hissing was quite a bit louder now.

"If I blew it with saving my pi game in basement, then at least I can call it up again and see if the numbers check."

"Try it," said Hugo. "I'll bet you can't find it."

Willard opened the read-only menu of basement, and scanned over to the number theory menu. It was blank. A message was all that remained, stating:

#### POWER SERIES BIN MATERIALIZED AND DUMPED

In a panic, he called up the master menu. The classical history and language files were also empty, and a red star lay alongside the biology file. He snapped this open, and found that the species file was active. In a moment of insight, he realized that all the recorded DNA was being dumped.

But it was all being materialized first. For some reason, certainly never to be known, the simplest forms were the first to be transformed from the genetic record to the actual expression of the entity. If there had been a million sets of nucleic code, a million living individuals were being created in exchange for the original record. And those million examples, be they pions or viruses or bacteria or yeast cells, were being materialized into the space all about him. There was the sense of a cloud, a grey transparent cloud, thickening all around him. The sounds became louder bit by bit, and the world about him became increasingly viscous.

The hiss was now a thing that could be felt as well, with a sound that resembled that of a smoke detector without the pulsing note. Simply a continuing whine. It built up yet more in intensity and he became aware of particulate things in the environment. Things that were spewing out of the bowels of the ship. First it seemed to be clumpy dust, but then it became more lumpy and had shapes that would have been familiar, if he'd been given the time to watch.

The hiss —

The hiss was now a roar. Willard backed away from the controls and screens, and took what comfort he could in having the ship's solid bulwark pushing against his back. He held his hands out in front of him, as if warding off aggressors that he couldn't see. He jerked aside as he felt some unknown life-form brushing his cheek. His mind said No! Then he realized that everything that had ever lived on earth, and for which the DNA code was known, was being re-created and released here aboard this isolated space ship. He screamed.

But his scream was never heard. The noise within the space ship

had become deafening. Saber-tooth tigers and bats and spiders and buzzards; an unending variety of forms and identities spewed forth from the basement. In the last few seconds of his life, Willard realized that there would never be any further communication either to or from earth, and the fate of PanSoph 2 would never be known. Perhaps this is how the original PanSoph ended, an untellable story stemming from the curiosity and carelessness of one of its crew. Traits, both, that are exquisitely human.

In time, Willard's ship, leagues from it's origins, fell silent and continued its way as a hulk with a cargo of dead, outwards into the void where the concept of intelligence and knowledge and consciousness did not exist.

Some day there might be a new try, a PanSoph #3, but perhaps not. It might be that the wish to preserve the magic of the human animal, or the story of its creation and reason for being, had already been lost on earth.

## CHAPTER 7. STAMPS

(Shura's voice)

My most keen interests at the present time are drugs, especially drugs that can influence or modify the function of the mind. A much earlier area of compulsive enthusiasm involved the collection and study of stamps. I mentioned in *PIHKAL* my memories as a child living next door to an ancient man, a Mr. Smythe, who was a bookdealer. He received books by mail, thus there were stamps attached, and they of course came from everywhere around the world. He kept the books, but he gave me the stamps. I would take them all up to my bedroom, float them off their wrappers with cold water, press them dry with newspapers and blotters and heavy books for weight, and then identify them with my precious and personal copy of the 1930 Scott's Stamp Catalog. Actually, my mother had prepared me for this philatelic interest in an unusual way. She had traveled, as a visiting teacher, from school to school in the Nile basin during and just after the Great War (1914-1918) and had given me letters (boxes of them) that she had written home from there. Khartoum and Cairo were common names to me, and identifying numerals in Arabic was my first venture into foreign literacy. I got from her, and I still have squirreled away and waiting for some free time, quite literally hundreds of the 1914 Sphinx and Pyramid common issues, and a lot of larger stamps with camels on them, all on envelopes and with some unusual postmarks. That promised to be an area of exciting research.

At about the time of World War II (which effectively renamed the Great War as World War I) I discovered the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Zhemstvo postal system of Russia. This threw me back into the 19th century, and I decided that it would be completely cool and sophisticated to limit my philately to only those stamps that had been used prior to 1900. I put what money I could spare in the 1950s into buying many lots at auction, and I put together (but even today have not yet organized) a neat collection of old and lovely stamps. Newspaper stamps, steam-ship line



stamps and, as it turns out, the very items that set the stage for this Washington, D.C. adventure: revenue stamps.

My compulsion in the area of the psychotropic drugs didn't become manifest until the 1950's when I participated in an experiment that involved the psychoactive drug mescaline. It caught my attention just as completely as had the Sudanese postal cards. I discovered that there were many simple things, in this case not stamps but chemicals, that could provoke changes of consciousness.

The passage of the Harrison Narcotics Act in 1915 created the first Federal law that illegalized drugs. There were two compounds specifically focused upon: cocaine (and the coca plant and its components) and heroin (and the opium poppy with its components and derivatives). For two decades these were the major, the only, pharmacological evils of our culture. There was no racism acknowledged; cocaine just happened to be the black man's problem, and opium just happened to be the Chinaman's problem. There were hot jazz clubs in New Orleans and opium smoking dens in San Francisco. The drug problem quickly became a legal concern instead of a medical one in that drug users were looked upon, legally, as criminals rather than as patients. Physicians were told to keep away from the treatment of addicts or they, too, would suffer legally. The law was cast in fiscal terms, not judicial, and it required permits and payments. Its enforcement was assigned to the Department of the Treasury rather than to the Department of Justice. One had to buy revenue stamps to possess these drugs, and it was the absence of these stamps that defined any crime that might be committed.

In the 1930's, another minority group population, the Mexican immigrants, served as the excuse for further Federal drug law change. The drug was marijuana. In 1932, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics was established within the Department of the Treasury, and it was responsible for the handling of any narcotics problems that might arise from the repeal of the alcohol prohibition amendment. The Commissioner of this Bureau, an ambitious politician named Harry J. Anslinger, saw the marijuana issue as an effective springboard to both power and fame, and personally launched a most disingenuous and dishonest propaganda campaign. The hysteria from the movies "Weed that Kills," and "Reefer Madness," is famous, and led directly to the passage of the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, which was specifically modeled after the Harrison Narcotics Act of 1914. The medical usefulness of marijuana was openly acknowledged, and there could be no question but that physicians, dentists and veterinarians could continue to prescribe it; they would simply have to pay some revenue fee. Any physician who wished to use this drug in his practice had to respect these tax laws. Most states followed this Federal lead by the enactment of similar

laws, and quite quickly legal access to marijuana by non-medical users was essentially terminated. This was the climate in the wake of the 1937 law, and the issuance of the Marijuana Tax Stamp in that same year.

It's here that the two areas of my personal interest — stamp collecting and research with psychoactive drugs — effectively overlap. As to the drug side of things, I wanted to answer questions that had never before been answered. Some of these questions had never even been asked before. Do the seeds of potent strains carry the essence of that potency, or is it the growing environment that effectively dictates the final plant? What is the relationship between the potency of a given strain of marijuana, and the components that can be shown to be in it? What is the contribution of the genetics of a given plant to its morphology? I decided to carry out several studies to address these questions, by actually growing marijuana on my farm. I needed the approval of the California Research Advisory Panel (whose name was finally shortened to Research Advisory Panel when the acronym of their original name became publicized). They reviewed my research protocol and approved it. I asked for, and received, a Federal drug license. So I planted and grew, and harvested, and analyzed a sizable crop of pot here on the farm where I live, all with the official organizations extending me blessings. But it became apparent that to learn from my findings I should make critical comparisons against the ultimate reference marijuana plant, the Federal Standard, which had been planted and raised in the Deep South.

So, I decided to begin exploring the world of administrative officialdom. Let's take advantage of my having the State's OK, and having a Federal license on the wall, and let's discover the moves needed to score a stash of Mississippi pot. I wrote to the appropriate authorities, and that is when I discovered that this was a revenue issue rather than a legal one, and there had to be Marijuana Tax Stamps involved in any such transactions. To receive legal marijuana, I had to pay for and receive the required Marijuana Tax Stamps, and then return them to the IRS office accompanying the actual order for the marijuana. So I played the game, and ordered two pounds of Mississippi marijuana, and four ounces of seeds and extracts. The first move of this transaction was the delivery to me of a massive sheet of Marijuana Tax Stamps, forty or fifty or so, at one dollar each, which was acknowledged and sent back with the actual order and a personal check as payment to effectively authorize their shipment of the marijuana. The plants arrived promptly. The stamps of course disappeared back into the maws of the system, but by good chance I had made a photocopy of them while they were in my hands.

It was about this time that I realized this was the ultimate, magical overlap, a synthesis of my two compulsions. It became apparent to me that the reward of this caper would be in the stamps, not the science. So I ordered

another four ounces of Governmental grass, got the four one dollar Marijuana Tax Stamps of 1937 (one dollar per ounce plus two cents per form), paid for them, let my check clear, and then immediately abandoned the scientific questions and simply kept the stamps. I chose to add them to my stamp collection, expanding my Africas and my Austrias to now include four U.S. revenues.

This was in February, 1971. I had no way of foreseeing how such a trivial event could give rise to an unforeseeable cascade of consequences. The first step in this developing story was a request from a friend of mine about a year later. He was writing a book on the medical uses of marijuana and had heard that I had received some government marijuana via the Tax Stamp process of the Treasury Department. He wanted to include a photograph of the actual order form, with the stamps attached, in his book. I made a photostat of this order form with the four stamps, with my name and other details blanked out to protect my privacy, and this appeared in his book, *Marijuana Medical Papers 1839-1972* as a part of a chapter written by Dr. David Musto discussing the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act.

This 1973 book was apparently the spark that lit another fuse, bringing me first a phone call, then a visit in the 1980's, from a gentleman who claimed to be a pharmacist in Seattle. This young man was an avid collector of revenue stamps. He had seen the photograph of these four stamps in my friend's book, and had contacted him and succeeded in getting from him both my name and my address. This man flew down to visit me, and spent a half day discussing many aspects of drugs, philately and the law. He stated that he was interested in the legal marijuana situation since he was convinced that it had been used as a device for the manipulation of immigrants. But I personally believed that he truly wanted nothing more than the sensual pleasure of looking at these stamps, and maybe just touching them. Well, it worked out to his sorrow but very much to my own advantage (as became apparent later) that I had completely lost the IRS document with the stamps attached to it. I quite honestly had no idea where it was. Had it been taken by someone? Had it never been returned by my friend after he photographed it for his book? Was it simply buried under a mountain of papers which is the world I live and work in? Whatever. I could not put my hands upon it. Our pharmacist, obviously disappointed, returned to Seattle.

In the 1990's the issue came up again in a completely unexpected way. I received a call from a Special Agent Schmitz, of the Oakland office of the FBI, who said he would appreciate the chance to talk to me and ask a few questions. He came out to the farm, and the conversation went something like this:

"Do you happen to know a pharmacist from Seattle who was interested in the 1937 Marijuana Tax S t a m p ? "

"Yes, I do."

"Did he visit you?"

"Yes, he did."

"Did you sell him any such stamps?"

"No, I did not."

There were many additional questions, but slowly the story began to take form. I volunteered all of the information that I had, including the fact that the stamps were nowhere to be found, and that the curious philatelist had returned without having seen them. He asked if I could establish the date of the visit, and this proved to be easy, since I did know where my historic appointment books were kept, and I found the date of the visit. He borrowed the book, and it was promptly mailed back to me after being copied. All this took on the earmarks of a criminal action and, when I was asked by the FBI agent if I would be willing to give some sworn statement to them covering the details of the story, I assured them that I certainly would.

Things were to become more complex yet. A few months later I received a request to appear at a Grand Jury panel in Washington. To be exact, it was not a request, but a summons. You are not asked to come; you are told to come. I went, and spent a most informative afternoon with an Assistant U.S. Attorney who filled me in on many details of the story. Apparently there had been some strange goings-on at the Smithsonian Institution where the U.S. Government had put some of these 1937 Marijuana Tax Stamps on display. A young man had expressed keen interest in them and, having inspected them closely and carefully, left. But the stamps had apparently disappeared at about the same time. He had been observed attempting to swap them at a stamp fair in San Francisco, and when he was asked about them by Federal police he stated that he had bought them from me. But a bit of forensic detective work immediately established that the copies he had were the very ones that had been taken from the Washington Museum.

My testimony to the Grand Jury was to affirm that these stamps had not been provided to him by me. I so testified, sharing the sad fact with the jury that these were still lost items and I still held forth the hope that they might show up some day, as they might prove to be quite valuable. There was a feeling of indifference from the jury, as if they couldn't care less, but I had spoken honestly and was quite happy to return home and forget the matter.

Behind my desk I have a battery of filing cabinets, eight of them, each four drawers high, where I keep reprints, correspondence, and manuscripts. About two years ago I needed to file a letter and a reprint concerning a specific *Psilocybe* species, but I could not find my mushroom files. I knew

that I had relocated the folder from one drawer to another because things were just too crowded. I found the folder one drawer down, and just behind it I saw an open pentaflex hanging folder that said, "Gov't letter re Pot." I pulled it out, and found that it contained the entire two decades of exchanges of correspondence with the FDA, the BNDD and DEA, and the IRS. With an eerie feeling of having come home again, I leafed through page after page of correspondence, of application forms and canceled checks. Towards the bottom of the file, there was a photocopy of the forty-or-so stamps and the order form for the two pounds of marijuana. My search was almost completed; there was one sheet left in the file. It turned out to be the unsent order form, and the four beautiful tax stamps were still neatly attached. I believe that I did not move for several minutes. The lost had been found, and I now had closure on a fascinating story of a completed era of pharmacological and fiscal history.

I have no idea how many of these stamps have ever made it into the public domain. I have personally seen fifty-one of them, and also there are these four I now hold which occupy a special page in my collection. It is just possible that they are the only copies that exist outside of the Smithsonian Institution or the IRS archives.

## CHAPTER 8 LENINGRAD LETTERS

(Shura's voice)

It must be remembered that in 1985, the Soviet Union was still a most intractable police state; there were no signs of the fragmentation and diffusion of authority that now define the scene. There was (and for all I know perhaps still is) a rigid control of movement, speech, radio, television, and mail, along with a nearly pathological mistrust of strangers. This xenophobia did not generally show itself at the level of the common man, but grew as one went up the political and military hierarchy.

When the Leningrad letter arrived, it had a most unusual appearance. My name and address were clearly printed, in English, and the postage was, of course, paid for in Soviet stamps. The writer's return name, address, and Zip code were where they should have been. He was Anatole Zhoborov and (according to a Russian friend of mine) he lived on a rather fashionable avenue in Leningrad. It was at that point that all conventional appearance ended. The immediate unusual feature was the lettering that shone forth in brilliant red on the back of the envelope. A message was printed there, on the two edges of the sealing flap, and on the construction seams of the lower half, forming a sort of lurid St. Andrew's Cross. There, for all to read, was the message "SAVE ME GOD, IF YOU IS." And on the lower seams, "PEACE" and "NO WAR." I inspected the envelope most carefully, and even to my inexperienced eye there were obvious signs of entry. The gum of the flap was slightly misplaced, and a small scrap of selvahe had been stuck exactly at the tip of the flap to re-seal the envelope. It even covered a small bit of the red message.

I opened the envelope with an extremely sharp knife, in order to do as little damage as possible. The text of the letter was written in a cursive style with the letters separated from one another, and it was in English. The content was clearly about drugs — drugs that have been classified in the United States as street, or illegal, drugs. There was information on the use and availability of opium and morphine (heroin was not mentioned),

amphetamine (methamphetamine was not mentioned), PCP, mescaline, and hashish. Details were offered as to prices, availability, sources (at least the city of manufacture), and as to the popularity of each. All this from inside the Soviet Union. Wow. And all this from a country where there is no drug problem, at least according to the propagandists.

The accompanying text was equally sophisticated. Methods of manufacture were outlined, and the chemical structures had obviously been drawn by the hand of a person well studied in chemistry. The final line was a request for an exchange of correspondence. I was completely in a quandary as to just who this Anatole person was, and during the subsequent exchange of letters he never really told me, and I could only speculate with the few bits of the puzzle I had. He was knowledgeable about drugs. He wrote in rather good English. He showed a true Russian cultural background with the dropped articles in his writing and the added *g*, before the year of the date. He also appeared to be a person with some form of death wish, having written to me of such matters with an obvious flag on the back of his envelope.

Anatole was a person with consistent patterns, as I was to discover in the course of our developing correspondence. I tried to place him in a society with which I was not familiar. Was he indeed a young individual involved in the illicit drug scene? Was he a patient in some mental hospital who had once been involved in the illicit drug scene? Perhaps he was not a "he" at all, but a "them," a group of people at the KGB who had decided that it might be of value to appear to be a young individual, and initiate contact with an American who is knowledgeable about the American drug scene, for some future purpose? Or perhaps a group, not of the KGB but of the CIA with an agenda of its own, mailing strange letters from the Leningrad post office? Clearly his highlighting the envelope with the red writing had caught someone's attention, as the letter had been opened and presumably read. But it was sealed up again and sent on its way with no effort to hide the intrusion. The correctness of the postage indicated that if anything had been removed, it had been very light. It was weird, and I had no clue as to who or what Anatole represented. But I was certainly curious.

My answer to him was a model of circumspection and caution. All questions were answered with accuracy, supplemented with a carefully measured amount of unsolicited information. I volunteered the popularity of methamphetamine and of MDMA in the United States, and added that heroin and other synthetic substitutes were seen here more frequently than were opium or morphine. My letter was printed out from the computer, but I made a point of signing my name Shura in ink, and in cursive Cyrillic, to see if I might provoke some reciprocity in getting him to sign his own first name in some diminutive form. He never did. It was always presented in its full and proper form.

I sent my letter off, but I felt I should be equally diligent in flagging it. Why not play the game in the easterly direction as well? I used the old retired IBM Selectric typewriter to write his address on the left side of the front of the envelope in the typical American way, with the addressee's name first, followed by street number and name, then the city, and finally the country, USSR. Then, just to the right of that, I rewrote the address completely in Cyrillic, using the appropriate ball in the Selectric. But here it appeared not only in the Russian type font, but in the proper inverted Russian format as well. First the country, CCCP, then the city, the street name and number, and finally the name of the addressee. That, I felt, should be unusual enough to catch the eye of the CIA, or the KGB, or whoever else might be interested. I used exactly the right amount of air mail postage, and sent it off. Apparently my letter went right through.

The return letter from Anatole was considerably more detailed, and for the first time he ventured into the area of variously substituted Fentanyl compounds. Rather than providing some clues to help solve the enigma of who or what he was, this letter only added further fuel to the mystery. His mention of Fentanyl triggered some interesting thoughts and fun speculations in the area of pharmacology and chemical warfare.

A few years earlier, there had been a new form of "heroin" appearing on the streets of the larger cities of California. It was called China White, and it responded to none of the presumptive tests for heroin. And the overdosed users gave none of the usual measures of the presence of acetylmorphine or morphine, both standard metabolites of heroin, and routinely seen in the screening of patients. But the signs of heroin overdose were there — pin-point pupils, breathing problems, and narcosis. It was only with the use of a radioimmune assay designed for Fentanyl that the first clues as to the nature of the drug became apparent. It was not Fentanyl, but it was awfully close to Fentanyl. A sample went back to the research labs of the DEA (called Special Testing by its supporters, or Special Resting by those who had limited patience) and in good time the drug was identified as being a methyl homologue of Fentanyl. They said that, based on the presence of an extra carbon atom *here* in the molecule, the drug was a known thing, and was clearly being synthesized by some very sophisticated chemist somewhere. And with such extremely high potency (the active dose was down in micrograms) it should be easy to manufacture a great number of doses with only modest equipment. "A hundred million doses could be made with what could be bought at the hardware store for a few hundred dollars," was how one congressman put it.

Bang — it was made illegal. But the story quickly became more complex. It turned out that the initial China White really had the added carbon *there* in the molecule, but by the time the correction had been



publicized within the forensic community, a sample had been seized from illicit sources with the added carbon placed in the *here* position, just where the Feds had originally thought. This "Son of China White" proved to be of similar extreme potency, and was soon followed by more and more Fentanyl analogues with other minor changes. There were methyl groups in yet other places, and carbon chains became different lengths, and new elements such as sulfur or fluorine were occasionally introduced.

Who was doing it? Was it all one person? Where was he located? There was quite an official effort made, but never were any completely satisfactory answers found by the authorities. I personally had been fantasizing a scenario that exploited the original name which contained the word "China." I had noticed that there had been quite a flurry of recent publications from Red China describing the synthesis and pharmacology of some fluorinated Fentanyls. This had followed an extensive quiet period, when almost nothing in this area had been published at all. Once before I had seen a similar quiet period followed by a burst of activity. This was in the Russian chemical literature in the area of quinuclidine chemistry. I suspect that the Soviet chemists were involved in research with compounds of this type in the area of Chemical Warfare, because only a short time after this quiet period ended, I learned from an inside source at Blackwood Arsenal that quinuclidine benzilate was unofficially described as an incapacitating agent in the U.S. arsenal.

Could China be developing, or better, had China been developing, some super-potent Fentanyl analogues as potential warfare agents? Let the fantasy roll. Maybe the Chinese were using second class citizens (the drug-using population of California) as guinea pigs for the initial human trials of their new drugs. After all, several pharmaceutical houses in the United States had also chosen to run the first human trials of the early contraception pills abroad, on what might be thought of, by some, as second class citizens (the fertile population of Puerto Rico). So, there was precedent.

The make-believe scenario rattled on — who would be the importers? Were the profits funneled back to Asia, or were they the pay-off for distribution and reporting? Were there any one-to-one correlations between Chinese scientific literature and the things seen here?

A second international connection was obvious in the fact that all the legitimate Fentanyl line came out of Belgium. There, research into the value of these compounds as anaesthetics was proceeding apace, with the development of new compounds that emphasized potency (which can be related to safety) and duration (short action was a virtue in surgical anesthesia). From these laboratories came such clinically useful inventions as Carfentanil, Sufentanil and Alfentanil. It was also observed, in connection with the radioimmune assay work being done in this country, that

those Fentanyl analogues with a "second substituent in the piperidine 4-position" could not be seen by radioimmune assay. They were completely transparent, so there would be no way of spotting the use of such drugs by any standard urine screening analysis. This observation was never widely publicized, a point which made subsequent events even more intriguing.

Back to the Leningrad letters. Here in the second letter, I was getting quite a body of information on Fentanyl. Speculation is cheap, but it is fun. Could China be using some drug-users in Leningrad as an experimental population of second class citizens? Or was Leningrad merely the tip of an iceberg when it came to drug use in the Soviet system? I wanted more information from my correspondent concerning Fentanyl, so I asked some specific questions in my reply to him.

The third letter from him added yet more confusion to this already confused picture. In it, there was not a single mention of drugs. Everything was about explosives. Structures of great beauty and delicate complexity, with stated melting points, indicators of temperatures of detonation, discussion of bruisseance — in all, completely sophisticated technological jargon that rang of competence. Why explosives? Why me? There was an intriguing hint at the end of the letter, in which Anatole (or KGB or CIA or whoever they were) asked me to send copies on to two people, both in the military in the United States. I was being asked to be the courier of some heaven-knows-what kind of military information between some Russian unknown and explosive experts here in the U.S. of A.? That was a little too much. I wrote to the people involved, and queried them as to whether they wished to received a letter from an A. Zhoborov in Russia with some information on chemical explosives. One letter was returned addressee unknown, and the other was never answered. And that particular letter from Leningrad, I too never answered. The subject of explosives never came up again.

Then a new bombshell. Again, with colorful alerting patterns of GOD SAVE US around the back flap, a registered letter from Leningrad. There could be no question of the attention-grabbing nature of the messages. The young lady at the post office asked me, with her eyebrows raised, "You mean that *this* came from Russia?" I assured her that it did, and that I didn't understand it either. And in that letter, I got Fentanyl information beyond all expectations. There was a recipe that explained how one could start with one and a half kilo of this and then add a liter of that, stir, cook, filter and so on, and all of this ending up with *a* half kilo of some substituted Fentanyl worth maybe \$500,000 in the Swiss black market.

I was in awe. The details of large scale Fentanyl preparation. I mean, a half kilo of Fentanyl or one of its potent analogues, at maybe 50 micrograms a dose, is 10,000,000 doses. And even more provocative, he

volunteered the information that if one were to put a second substituent on the 4-position of the piperidine, the compounds could not be picked up by radioimmune assay.

So he was not only privy to very sophisticated synthetic information, but to very sophisticated analytical information as well.

Our correspondence continued for another year. It was rich with stories of Anatole being called in to what he called "The Big House," to give information to the KGB authorities, his hiding in fear of his life, his going to Moscow for a week to avoid what he called "The Narco Mafia," or his simply traveling to the Baltics to observe how the big scale chemistry was progressing. He sent me a couple of dozen extraordinary text books and reference volumes that were currently being used in the colleges and in the industrial research labs in the Soviet Union. He spoke of his desire to travel, and of his plans for eventual expatriation. But in the next letter the flavor would shift back to his being the pursuer of information from me, rather than being pursued by the authorities or the Mafia. He never gave me a vision of being a completely "together" person, yet there was never an impression of being a completely scattered one, either.

Then everything changed. He apparently got an exit visa through the simple (clever?, accidental?) transliteration of his name into French, rather than into English, orthography. He was Juoboroff rather than Zhoborov, and there appeared to be absolutely nothing in the computer to stop his emigration. So now he is in a Western European country, still pursuing his dance between organic chemistry and law enforcement. Apparently he has some chemical connections with a commercial laboratory where he is acting as a technician, and he is also providing information to the state police concerning the Narco Mafia in his new country. I must conclude that there is some sort of drug underground everywhere in the world.

My interchange of letters has slowly dropped to a trickle. And I have no way of judging if the narcotics trade in the Soviet Union is proceeding apace (despite his disappearance) or has dropped to nothing (because of his disappearance). However, there is a small but real possibility that I may again be made privy to what is going on. Within three weeks of Monsieur Juoboroff's departure I received, from a person unknown to me, another first letter, again from Leningrad.

## CHAPTER 9. LA RUTA DEL BAKALAO

(Shura's voice)

I have done a modest amount of traveling both inside and outside the United States. The list of foreign destinations have included Asia (Turkey), Central America (Panama), South America (Brazil) and the South Pacific (Australia), but a majority of my overseas explorations have been in Western Europe. The only countries I have missed until recently were, as I recall, Ireland, the Eastern European block (except for Czechoslovakia), Greece, San Marino, and Andorra. And Spain.

But Spain was added to the list as a consequence of an invitation to lecture somewhere else. In early 1992 I received a request to attend a meeting in Mexico, to give an opening address to a conference on Psychotropic Plants and Shamanism. This was being held in the Fall, in the city and State of San Luis Potosi which was, I must confess, a place I had never heard of before. There was to be a goodly collection of scholars and scientists there, in the areas of anthropology, botany, chemistry and pharmacology. The conference languages offered were Spanish and English but, as it turned out, most of the talks were in Spanish. And other than the two phrases "No tengo dinero" and "Hecho en Mexico por Mexicanos" (which I memorized during my one and only previous visit to Mexico in the late 1950's, the first for answering street urchins and the second from a back window sticker on a Ford) I did not know a single word of Spanish.

No, that is not entirely accurate. My parents and I had driven in our brand new Model A Ford to Tijuana when I was perhaps four or five years old, and from that vacation there was one memory of Mexico. We had driven into the hills, and were hurrying back on a nasty road to get to the border which at that time closed for the night at some early hour in the evening, 8 or 9 p.m. as I recall. The road back was peppered with yellow and black traveler advisory signs that said simply "D.C." We got to the border just after it was sealed up, so we spent the night in a hotel on the Mexican side of the border, and someone finally told me that D.C. stood for Desparados

Curvasos (literally Desperate Curves). And just now I remember something else. Something to do with my not knowing how to swim, and having been thrown, screaming, into the Pacific ocean by my father so that I would learn. This last item just now sprang into mind and, although it has nothing to do with the Spanish language, it may have something to do with the development of the relationship I had with my father. It's a memory that might be rewarding to pursue some day on an appropriate psychedelic drug.

Back to present day Mexico, in San Luis Potosi. My presentation went OK, considering that I was giving my talk from hand-written notes (in English) and each sentence was being translated into Spanish by Manuel Sanchez, in real time, by his deciphering of these very notes while seated alongside me. Alice and I became fast friends with him and his wife, Sophia.

The conference provided many free hours for exploring adventure. I remember having a terrible time orienting myself as to where I was in San Luis Potosi, even though I had a complete street map in my lap every time we went from our sleeping quarters (at the Cactus Motel) to the meal location (at the Motel Tuna), or to the meetings themselves at the Casa de la Cultura. I pride myself in always becoming oriented as to location in any new city within about 36 hours. But here, even though we took different routes each trip, in our private bus, I never could pin down just where on the map the Cactus place was. Then I discovered that my street map, which had all the major thoroughfares indicated in bright red, was a bit of a promoter's dream. These were the planned freeways, and they had not yet been constructed. Once I ignored them, I knew where I was.

Another magical tour was to the north (to Matahuala) and then west through Cedral to Real del Catorce which proved to be a former silver mine, now abandoned, and inhabited by a few hundred Indians, in total poverty. No, not total, as there were occasional satellite dishes and some well fed dogs, but this area appeared to be totally supported by a modest tourist trade coming to visit the area that is the Mecca of the Huichol pilgrimage. The mountains in this area are sacred, and it was not surprising that there was a quiet but inescapable street market, not only in bric-a-brac with a Christian motif, but also in freshly picked peyote buttons. Most of our party had chosen to meet in the parking area across from a deserted Catholic church and sense the history and magic of the fog-enshrouded terrain through the eyes of a non-scheduled alternative, 2C-B. We regrouped at about four in the afternoon at the only coffee shop in town, and made our way safely back to San Luis Potosi for dinner.

As with any meeting of this sort, the true value lay in the many personal interactions that took place. I received a tentative invitation from a totally charming philosopher/drug expert/writer named Antonio

Escobedo to teach in a Summer School in El Escorial, near Madrid, the following year, and perhaps to contribute to a second edition of this Shamanismo performance (in case it became a biannual tradition) in Barcelona, two years later. Suddenly there were two pentaflex folders for Spain hanging in my file drawer of future travels, where there had never been one before.

That wasn't all. As soon as Alice and I got home to the farm, we found a letter from a Spanish law firm asking for an opinion, in writing, as to the degree of harm that can visit the public by the use of MDMA. Well, such questions are pretty common, so off went a letter with a strongly worded opinion that MDMA is one of the safest drugs I have ever encountered. That, I felt, should put that matter to rest.

A formal invitation to teach at the Summer School came from Antonio in a few weeks. The class was to be held in the coming Summer, in the city of El Escorial, and was going to be on the subject of Civil Disobedience, Counter Culture, and Utopic Pharmacy. And there were the funds at hand for a second week repeat performance in the Canary Islands. I guess I had never really consciously thought of Spain as no longer being in the grip of Fascism and Franco, and I was certainly not expecting to find the government funding educational courses that included topics such as these. Again, it was an interaction largely in Spanish, and again a beautiful opportunity to expand yet further the circle of people we knew. Antonio was there as an organizer. Ott was there from Xalapa, and Thomas Szasz and Albert Hofmann. That was the faculty for this particular course. But there were peripheral treasures, such as Monica, Antonio's wife, and Jose Maria, a winsome psychiatrist, who invited me as a dinner guest to his home, an hour's drive away.

The structure of this Spanish Summer School system is totally remarkable, and would serve many other communities as a model for the use of funds for education. The lodging and meals (in an excellent hotel) are largely subsidized by the government, the expenses (travel and honoraria) of the faculty come from a 1% tax on some industry (in this case one of the banking systems) and the student gets all of this for something like \$200 for the week. There are several of these courses going on at the same time in El Escorial, and they continue for perhaps ten weeks during the summer there, and at other locations. A tremendous reward at a remarkable bargain. Why can't we do something like this at home?

On returning from this trip, I decided that the logical thing to do was to begin serious study of the language for the Barcelona trip, just in case it really did come to be, in 1994. The language of the conference would probably be English and the local language, and, if past experience was any measure, Spanish would play a major role. It was at about this time that I

discovered that the local language spoken in Barcelona (and all along the Costa Brava from the Pyrenees to Valencia, and in the Balearic Islands) is Catalan, so a fantasy flashed across my mind.

Many years ago I had the opportunity of hearing an address given at an international meeting by a famed French chemist. This just happened to be in London, where the official language of the conference was, of course, English. But, as of that time, the French Government had a rule concerning the conduct of its nationals when they were traveling abroad.

"I have been instructed by the French C.N.R.S.," the French scholar started, in French, "That any reports of research that have been subsidized by French funds, shall be reported in French regardless of where the talks are to be given."

The audience, largely non-French, groaned. M. le Professeur continued, still in French: "I have decided on a compromise. I will deliver it half in French and half in English."

A pause, then: "I have just completed the French half."

And the rest of the hour was in English, to the relief of the audience. My thought: to perhaps address the international crowd in the Barcelona meeting with a talk that at least started in Catalan, using the argument that I wished to extend this courtesy to our hosts, and then drop back into English for the rest of it. Pure fantasy, all, as there was as yet no invitation from anyone and there might never be one. Nonetheless I launched into tutoring lessons in spoken Catalan which I found to be a completely beautiful language.

Somewhere around here this Spanish connection began developing an aura of synchronicity. Everything sort of began converging. I received a fax from the law firm in Madrid that they wanted me to come to that city for a day or two to give testimony in an MDMA case. So I made a third Spain travel pentaflex, and wrote back that if I came to Spain I would need to travel by business class (uncrowded conditions and ability to move around) and that I would have to charge a handsome fee for the two days that I would be available for testimony. That should discourage the invitation, I thought. A check arrived promptly from a Bank in Puerto Rico, which cleared, and was used to cover a \$4000 plane ticket. The fat was in the fire. I was going again to Spain.

The week before Christmas was about as full as a week can be. I was responsible for giving final exams to my 75 students at Berkeley, and getting the exams corrected and the results into the registrar's office by Friday at 4 p.m.; there were two Christmas dinners I was obliged to attend; I had to pack all the papers I might need for the Spanish court, and be ready at 5:00 a.m. for a taxi to take me to the airport. Ahead of me was the prospect of travel on four airplanes, consultations with lawyers in at least two lan-

guages (I could always hope that someone would speak French, because in Spanish I am helpless), and two days of total alertness and mental sharpness in a strange courtroom, attempting to unravel the mysteries of the Spanish legal system. I refused to even think about the jet lag, coming and going.

As is so often the case with the unknown, it started off on an up-beat note, and continued to get better and better. I knew that it would be a worthwhile trip when I learned that my cab driver was an ex-speed chemist who abandoned the trade some seven years ago when he suddenly became a born-again Christian. We had a delightful hour's ride in the early morning's darkness with a conversation that bounced back and forth between 55-liter Pfaudler reaction vessels and the love of Jesus.

The first travel leg, from San Francisco to Dulles, was in the upper lounge of a 747, where I had the front seat (miles of leg room) and a young gentlemen at the window to my right whose two reading books were entitled *Synchronicity*, author unknown, and one of the early Castaneda books, *The Second Ring of Power*. In our conversation, Doug (his name) revealed that he had just evolved onto a path of self-discovery, knew of most of the writers of psychedelic texts, had heard of *PIHKAL* but didn't know how to find it, and very much wanted to buy a copy. I took down his name and address. The second half of the flight put me in the front of a 767, with a window seat companion named Anna, a young cardiologist who had married a Mexican man who gave her two children, but now she was returning to her home in Southern Spain to meet her family (minus the ex-husband, I think) and resume her medical career. Quite familiar with peyote and the Huichol Indians, Oaxaca mushrooms, ergot alkaloids, had heard of *PIHKAL* but had no idea of where to buy it. I took down her name and address. I just may have discovered a method of paying for my flights myself in the future!

In my talks with the lawyers involved with the MDMA case, I learned of the Spanish equivalent of the rave scene. The dance/music/drugs/no sleep party is not held in a single location as in England or the United States. Rather, it is more like a process that is a physical trip as well as a drug trip. It starts on a Friday evening, in Madrid, and strikes off for the nearest coastal city, which happens to be Valencia, to the East. The gathered masses stop at bars and dance locations along the way, to stoke up on more pills and buy water at \$5 a bottle. The party may never get to Valencia, but does return to Madrid late Sunday night, or even Monday morning, exhausted and somehow making it back to school or work. They called the road from Madrid to Valencia the Ruta del Bakalao, the route of the cod. The entire British concept of the Acid House was re-named in Spain after a fish and I cannot find the reason, if there is one. The press is casting the scene in a completely negative light, saying that MDMA is corrupting their youth.



What drugs are actually involved has never been determined. I have been told that there is a lot of speed, and certainly alcohol and pot. But the catch word that sells newspapers is "extasis" and it is getting the credit for a lot of damage. And here I am to argue before three judges (who certainly read newspapers) that MDMA is not a drug that is "greatly harmful" from the health point of view. The defendant gets about ten years in prison for the several pills he sold if they contained an officially designated "very harmful" drug (like cocaine or heroin or LSD), and something like three years if the drug was not officially designated "very harmful" (like pot and hash). And he had already spent over two years in prison just waiting for this trial. With the broad negative publicity about MDMA and the Ruta del Bakalao, this was an inauspicious time for the trial to occur. I did not look forward to my cross-examination.

There was a much more personal route that I was offered by my dear friend Antonio, who somehow found out that I was going to be in Madrid. I can only call it La Ruta de las Tapas. Tapas is not a fish, but the Spanish word for bits. Little bits. It is a luncheon phenomenon that is, I suspect, exclusively Spanish. I had heard of it before, and it is highly recommended in the guide books, but nowhere had I seen an actual description of how one goes about it. My last time in Madrid, with Alice, along with our friends Manuel and Sophia, we went into what surely was a tapas bar, but all we saw were old-looking mayonnaise-ish salads under a glass cover. Do you sit at the bar and point? Do you point and then find a table? Do you stake out a table and then browse the bar? We had no idea as to the custom, so instead of doing something wrong and making fools of ourselves, we opted to sit at a table and order some light meal from the dinner menu.

This spot where I was to meet Antonio (the Cuevillas Restaurante at Ferraz #5) was completely charming, just a few blocks from my hotel, and I was there ahead of him. I stood out of the way of the waiter's traffic, near the door, for ten minutes (the staff blessed me by ignoring me) and then sat on one of the bar stools and ordered a tinto (red wine). The glass was put in front of me, the wine poured from an unfamiliar label sporting the appropriate word, "Raijo" with a 1989 date, and was excellent. A small plate with two dollar-sized toasted flakes of French bread were placed alongside it; one was spread with something deep red in color, the other with something amber colored. I thought I had just eaten my first tapas, but I was soon to discover differently. They were strange and delicious, but they were indeed just snacks.

While waiting, I had a chance to get the feel of the place. It was class. The front room where I was seated was the bar/tapas waiting area, with a half dozen hand-made bar stools arranged around a polished bar-top, with

a sealed-off glass counter at the back of the wooden surface. In this area were several plates, one with a collection of duplicates of the colored chips I had just eaten, another with fine narrow strips of white fish crossed with strips of brownish fish, yet others which were unidentifiable. On the wall at the back of the bar were rows of bottles of brandies and wines, reflected against a long mirror. There was a steady ebb and flow of white-jacketed waiters obviously coming from a kitchen and carrying strange foods through the front room and down stairs (there must have been tables there). There was a pair of draft beer handles and the bartender would periodically draw a draft into a glass of unusual shape. Glasses. There must have been dozens of types, all sparkling.

In a few minutes Antonio appeared, and joined me at the bar. The parking problem was terrible, he said (it is always terrible in downtown Madrid), and he sipped from the glass of red wine that was immediately put in front of him while he looked at the menu. He ordered a stop-gap plate of the red and cream-colored dollar sized things. The red proved to be pork loin, finely ground and spiced, with the fat included as a flavoring component; the other remained unknown.

Then Antonio ordered the first plate of the bona fide tapas, and demanded glasses of Chardonnay to come with it. I wondered if it was appropriate to have white wine following red, and he assured me that the food dictates the wine, never does the wine dictate the food. A plate appeared from the kitchen with six small French bread slices on it, with a creamy thick spread on each. They were a bit salty, sharply flavored, and totally delicious. The wine was cold and excellent. I learned that this tapas was a rough puree of sea urchin eggs, mixed with something. There followed more delectable mysteries in dark sauce, bits of goose liver, toasted French bread and a dry wine. Then, as a final dish, a small plate of *jabon*, thin slices of ham from pigs fed exclusively on acorns of a certain type of oak tree. This was accompanied by a sharper, darker red wine which must remain anonymous since I wasn't paying attention.

The finale: an espresso, and a generous offering of calvados in a large warmed snifter. This is the Spanish tapas. Snacks it is not. Feast it is. I don't think I could manage a daily lunch bill of \$70, but if I could, this is the way I would do it.

Back to the hotel to await the call for the evening consultation.

I made arrangements to meet Mario, the defendant in the case, in a taxi at the front of my hotel at 9:45, but the famous Madrid traffic dictated the meeting to be 10:15, and we went directly to the courthouse. For the first time I actually made some personal connection with real people related to the defendant. His mother (striking, fiftyish), spoke fine English, lived in Puerto Rico, and was the source of my check for the air fare; brother (lived

somewhere in US, spoke real American) and wife (slightly hippie, with beads, mousy, no English) were all in the lobby in the basement of the courthouse, just outside the courtroom. People kept coming, some were introduced to me as the six experts for one side or the other, and I met the young girl who was the court-appointed translator. The intended strategy was to ask the magistrates to allow all the experts (in Spain, they must come in pairs) to be seated together at the same time, rather than have them go in individually (the forensic toxicologists, then the clinical practitioners, and then the research scientists). The head tribunal gentleman said OK but in exchange, insisted on taking the lead in directing the questioning strategy. We sat outside and waited while our lead attorney, Jaime, was cross-examining the analytical team as to how they determined what drug was there and in what amounts. One of the analysts started to define MDMA as a highly dangerous drug, and was completely shot down. I was amazed to hear that challenges to the statements of prosecution witnesses were virtually unheard of. They are the authorities.

We finally went in. This was the second new interior I'd had the chance to see and describe, in as many days. A quality tapas bar it was not. The courtroom was drab, perhaps 40x40 feet square, with a 10x10 foot cage with bullet-proof glass walls located at the middle of the left side to contain a terrorist if one happened to be on trial. At the front was a U-shaped bench, raised a foot or two above floor level, with the three magistrate judges sitting facing the audience. All were in black robes, with an important patch of authority on the left breast, and with white lace wrist pieces coming up almost to the elbow. The center person was the principal magistrate, a clean-cut fifty year old with short peppery hair and beard formed into a goatee with an El Greco style white patch from the lower lip down to the chin. He was the only one who did any talking. On his right, stage left, was a dumpling old man with jowls and glasses who, most remarkably, seemed to be asleep most of the time without ever closing his eyes. And the third, stage right, was a 40 year old woman with brown hair, no makeup at all, a broad, tight-lipped mouth with an almost-smile on it, who kept moving her head and eyes about as if looking at everyone in the court, but never once made eye contact with anyone, at least not with me.

On the left side, the prosecutor, young, round-faced with a small black mustache, also with lace on the lower fore-arms. On the right, the defense attorneys, each with an outer garment cloak that was black and looked like satin. Three were up at the same height as the others, Jaime the closest, with his slightly long hair and scraggly beard. He was wearing a tie that was not quite in place, and a wrinkled shirt under his cloak. Number two and three were, respectively, a roly-poly man with a bushy mustache and a small, thin girl of around 25, who never participated in any way. As

there were five defendants, there were five lawyers, and the remaining two were at a table that was an extension of the three-lawyer branch of the U-shape, but down at the main floor level, with the rest of us. The court-appointed translator, the concession to my ignorance of the Spanish language, sat alongside these lower two. And we, the six witnesses, sat on a bench and a couple of chairs, facing the magistrates, sort of completing a small rectangle. The defendants sat behind us with their protective bailiff, and the audience was on parallel benches towards the back of the room.

The mechanism of question/response was new to me. The chief magistrate asked a question, and each expert in turn took a portable microphone and replied. I, the sixth, was then informed by the translator what the question was that the others had answered, and had my turn. I had a preview of the length of the response of the others, but not the content. I felt very alone.

I really blew it on the last question before the coffee/smoking break, which was one of the first from the prosecutor rather than from the principal magistrate. It was whether I thought that there was any permanent damage resulting from the addiction to cocaine. I knew that the leitmotif of the defense was to build on the known subdivision of drugs in Spanish law as being either highly dangerous (like cocaine, heroin or LSD, thus long prison sentencing) or only slightly dangerous (like marijuana and hashish, thus short prison sentencing). MDMA had never been so classified, and if it were to fall into a low danger category, the defendant might get off for time served, but if MDMA were to be swept into an ugly status, he just might get another 10 years behind bars.

So, to the question, does addiction to cocaine lead to permanent damage, I answered honestly, but not helpfully that, except for possible erosion to the nasal mucosa, there were few long-term consequences. Everyone else had knocked cocaine, and I was (I found out) placed in a California-pro-drug-drugs-are-harmless image with my reply. I effected damage control my next time at the mike. I explained that I had understood the question to refer to the body status once the addiction phase had been treated and had become history. However, during the addiction phase for either cocaine or heroin, there is an extensive deterioration of behavior patterns that was dictated by the compulsive search for a continuing source of drugs. None of this was to be seen with MDMA, as there was no addiction. I found myself back on the righteous path, and would never stray again.

Things really tightened up nicely after that, and I felt increasingly comfortable. A few slips were made here and there, but they were not of my doing. My translator got the word primer mixed up with primal (I understand a weird sentence came out of that) and toleration and tolerance got garbled somehow. But more and more, the questions of both the

magistrate and the defense lawyer were directed to me. It seems that I was the only one who had actually seen people in a clinical setting with known dosages of MDMA of known identity and purity. And it was never made obvious that my doctorate was not a medical one. I did not volunteer to correct this impression. Questions such as: should MDMA be in the most dangerous category of restriction? Absolutely not. Is there medical value intrinsic to MDMA? Yes, this is well established, and now clinical tests to evaluate that were being designed in several countries. Has the drug been shown to be dangerously lethal? It has been reliably estimated that up to 5,000,000 persons have used MDMA in England alone, and with only 5 deaths reported, I must conclude that MDMA is one of the safest drugs known today.

And: does MDMA cause a severe cardiovascular crisis? There is a small amount of cardiovascular push, but no more severe than a few cups of coffee or some vigorous exercise. This last contribution especially pissed off the medical toxicologist, who fumed to contradict this (slightly prejudiced) statement. The defense lawyer interposed with a nasty question, "Señor el Doctor: on what, besides the anecdotal review of Dr. Ron Seigel, do you base your opinions?" He had nothing and he became quiet again.

But the best was saved for last. The prosecutor finally entered the fray with a treasure that he had obviously been saving up. He announced that he had just received the most recent, up-to-date literature on MDMA, from the Spanish Health Council, provided them by UNESCO. He asked me if I was familiar with it. He gave a sheaf of a few papers to the bailiff to give to the translator. She looked at it, and began translating the first line into Spanish. It went:

"MDMA, Metilin-dioxi-metamfetamina —"

"No, no, no," said the prosecutor. "Translate the title of the publication."

"Pee-kal."

"Are you familiar with this information reference?" he asked me.

"My wife and I wrote it."

"You are the author?"

"Yes."

I caught a fleeting smile pass over the face of the principal magistrate (the first human response I had seen from him all day) and within twenty minutes I found myself, along with the entire witness and law party (the friendly ones at least), across the street from the courthouse building at a tapas place called "Rio Freo," enjoying a glass of *tinto*.

Six months later, I received a call from a friend in Madrid who informed me, with considerable relish, that my face was all over the newspapers and television, because MDMA had been officially categorized as an only slightly dangerous drug in Spain. We had won.

Part Two:

Psychedelics and  
Personal Transformation

## CHAPTER 10. PLACES IN THE MIND

(Alice's voice)

Some form of alteration of consciousness can happen to anyone, anywhere, without warning and having no apparent cause. It could range from an unfamiliar shift in perspective, creating a feeling of disorientation, lasting only a few minutes, to a profound change in perception and comprehension, persisting for days and even weeks. Understandably, most people who find themselves in such a state for the first time tend to get frightened. Their fear and anxiety drive out whatever learning might have been possible if they had known from the beginning that, first, the altered state would be temporary and second, that such an experience does not imply sickness of either mind or body.

Of course, if there are indications of actual mental illness or brain disorder, such as intense headaches, noticeable changes of personality (for instance, episodes of violent behavior in a usually calm person) or other such symptoms well-known to the mental health community, there certainly should be an effort made to contact a psychologist or psychiatrist for an evaluation. But what I am talking about in this chapter is a change in perception and perspective, not in social behavior or the ability to think rationally and logically.

Unfortunately, too many psychiatrists haven't the slightest idea of how best to handle an experience of this kind, which some people call a transformative process. They tend to treat it the way they would treat psychosis (which this is not), and to prescribe tranquilizers or, worse, anti-psychotic drugs. The primary purpose of these drugs is to re-close the doors which have opened — unplanned and unbidden — between the conscious mind and the unconscious.

If the person who is undergoing an episode of this nature has heard of the "Spiritual Emergence Network," (see acknowledgements) he can at least hope to speak to a therapist of some kind (some psychiatrists are available) who will be understanding, reassuring and supportive, and not

treat him as if he's mentally ill.

It is important to add here that whether or not a person experiencing this shift in perspective has ever taken a psychedelic drug in the past, this is *not* what is called a "flashback," and should not be dismissed as such. Genuine flashbacks are described in a later chapter.

As to why these spontaneous shifts in consciousness occur in some people, it seems to me that the human psyche has its own program, tucked away somewhere in what we call the unconscious mind. It has its own unpublished schedule, its own private plans for the learning and psychic stretching that is to be done, and often little, if any, concern about the inconvenience it may cause to have one's customary orientation to the world turned upside down, however temporarily.

Most difficult of all, the unconscious psyche doesn't seem to be interested in letting the conscious mind know what's going on, except in the language of dreams, and that language — when the dream can be remembered at all — is very hard for most people to decipher. Each human psyche has a personal dream language, and it isn't possible to accurately interpret somebody else's dreams without knowing him and his symbolic language intimately.

Although this isn't a book about dream analysis, there are a couple of things you might remember when trying to understand your own dreams. One: except for Big Dreams (as Jung called them) and lucid dreams, most dreams are status quo reports from the unconscious. Two: the important things about dreams are not usually the symbols or images chosen by the unconscious, but the feelings and emotions that pervade the dream. They are the clues to what is being reported. Three: interpretation is easier if you can keep in mind that the unconscious does not censor according to the rules or mores of your culture or religion; its job is to tell you what's going on inside you and what emotions are being felt; the approval or disapproval of your conscious mind is of no concern whatsoever to your unconscious. And finally, four: many people ask, "Why go to the bother of remembering or thinking about your dreams anyway?" One answer is simply, "To keep myself honest about myself." Another, of course, is, "To keep learning about the nature of the human mind."

So, if you are one of those who find themselves trying to deal with a breakthrough of the unconscious psyche into the everyday field of awareness, it is hard to know how to handle it, how to evaluate it, and how to get something positive out of the experience.

I would like to make some suggestions about coping with non-drug related alterations of consciousness. These experiences are not necessarily different from those resulting from psychedelic experimentation, except that the non-drug eruptions can sometimes last several days, while the



psychedelic breakthroughs usually come to an end when the drug is no longer effective.

If you find yourself in one of these states, without having taken a drug shortly beforehand, remember that you're not "stuck;" remind yourself that it will pass, most likely in a few hours; at most, a few days. In the meantime, there are things you can do.

If you have a close friend who is available to stay with you until you are through the experience, call him or her and explain that you've suddenly been plunged into a strange, unfamiliar mental place, and you need the company of somebody who can watch over you with caring, and without being judgemental, since you have no way of predicting how this experience will play itself out, or what you will go through before it comes to an end. You can reassure your friend, however, that you can be depended on to conduct yourself in a way that will not endanger anyone else, and that this kind of altered state does NOT involve psychotic acting out of any kind.

Your friend can help you by cooking simple meals when you're hungry, answering your phone, taking care of your pets, and making sure that you feel safe in your home. And, above all, by listening to what you need to express, and being quietly supportive. Don't expect a friend to interpret anything you're seeing or feeling. That is, and will be, your job — if not immediately, then eventually.

(If you feel that you need more help than a friend can give, in managing this experience while it is going on, or help in understanding it after it is over, you can call the Spiritual Emergence Network, as I mentioned before. And the members of the organization known as Subud — if one is listed in your city directory — are also familiar with this territory, as are many spiritual teachers of all faiths. If you have no access to such people, your nearest public library may offer you the greatest variety of answers. Help can be found in the book, *Spiritual Emergency*, edited by Dr. Stanislav Grof, and Christina Grof, and in the other writings of Dr. Stan Grof. Also of value are the writings of Dr. C.G. Jung, Dr. John W. Perry and Aldous Huxley's *Doors of Perception*, *Heaven and Hell*, and *Moksha*.)

Whether or not you can find a friend to keep you company for a while, you should — if at all possible — excuse yourself from work (there's always a flu bug around to blame), because changes in your perceptions of space and time, and probably some increased sensitivity to sound, color and emotional fields, might make a normal work day difficult to maintain. Give yourself some quiet and privacy, and a chance to go along with whatever is flowing through you, so that you can learn as much as possible.

Some of us seem more prone to these kinds of breakthroughs than others, and, again, there is no way to know why. However, I tend to believe that the attitude of one's family (and of the society, the culture, in which that

family has its place) toward matters non-physical and non-material may have something to do with it.

In other words, in a country like India, where numerous gods and goddesses are assumed to be involved in human affairs, the possibility of a drift into an altered state could be a lot less frightening to the average person than it would be in this country. Here, generally speaking, the spiritual world is considered either non-existent or safely confined to certain designated buildings, to be dealt with for only one or two hours per week, and even then with a mediator — a priest, minister or rabbi — running interference.

You might also fare better if your family is one in which dreams are often shared, and everyone understands them as being reports from the unconscious. When a child grows up among people who are fascinated — not frightened — by all aspects of the human mind, he stands a good (or at least better than average) chance of being able to get through a sudden, unplanned alteration of his normal consciousness with the least possible degree of anxiety and the maximum amount of learning.

It was at just such a time in my own life that I was told, by a wise old psychologist whom I have called Adam, "What you're going through is a process. All you have to do is not get in its way." He told me to learn everything I could while it lasted, and assured me that it wouldn't last more than a few days. This turned out to be the case, probably due to my unconscious mind having heard Adam's limited-duration prediction, and believing it, or perhaps just deciding it was a good plan to follow.

I would add this to Adam's admonition: take notes. As much as you can, write everything down as it happens; every feeling in body or mind, every concept, every shift of emotion. The notes could be of immense importance to you at some future time. However, the main value of keeping track of your experience, finding words to express what's going on, is that it will help you to assimilate the changes you're undergoing, and put them in perspective.

If you have had feelings of helplessness, of being out of control during your altered state, you'll find that focusing your thoughts on the words and phrases that best describe whatever is going on (it doesn't matter whether you use pen and paper or a tape recorder) will gradually bring back a sense of being in charge of what's happening within you and to you.

Why? Because you are taking input which is coming at you fast and with great intensity — colors, concepts, emotions, a sense of cosmic dimensions within the most ordinary objects, and a continuing sense of immense meaningfulness — and you're attempting to contain it as much as possible. Writing everything down, or talking into a tape recorder, are ways of imposing your own structure on interior chaos, and it will, bit by bit, give

you a sense of participation to replace the feeling of being victimized. It will enable you to let go of fear, and perhaps open yourself to whatever it is that your psyche wants you to discover.

If, for any reason, you cannot or don't want to write or tape, then make use of whatever form of artistic expression you can: clay modeling, painting, anything that will express what you are experiencing and allow you to reshape and restructure it, thus helping you regain some sense of control.

For those who are used to praying, this is a good time to practice whatever you understand is meant by the word "*prayer*," asking your own higher Self — or God or your angel — for support, guidance and blessing.

In time, the shift in consciousness will right itself, and you'll be back to your normal baseline, or at least close enough to it to allow you to function comfortably in the world again. You should emerge from this kind of unexpected stretching of psychic muscles with a feeling of having opened up new dimensions within yourself, and an increased awe at the wealth of information that lies below the conscious mind in all of us. There are treasures of light and treasures of darkness within our souls, all of them wanting to be discovered and explored, and eventually understood.

Alterations of consciousness are inevitable if you are on a spiritual path using psychedelic drugs, visionary plants, or other methods such as, for instance, holotropic breathing, hypnosis or meditation.

You can find yourself (whether you are prepared or not) in a place inside your mind where familiar landmarks are nowhere to be found. Some of these places can infuse you with power and light; others will hold you in terror or sorrow. You must learn your way through each one because only by doing so can you begin to become familiar with the deeper levels of your own psychic interior; it is the only way to begin to understand who and what you are.

The choices you make, in all areas of life, help define who you are, not only as an individual human being, but as a member of your family and community. They form your personality, the part of you which other people know. Beneath this persona, however, is an essence which can never be completely known by another person, and it is the awareness of this core Self that will give you a psychic anchor if you should find yourself in a difficult, disorienting place, somewhere along the way. The core Self is not a personality; it is not a definable, stable *thing*; it is a form of spiritual energy, so it is never still, yet it remains the same. You will always recognize it as yourself, the essence of who you are, and you can seek it out and hold onto it when you're facing interior chaos.

I can only speak with authority about what I know personally. Many, though not all, of my most intense spiritual experiences have been

brought about by the use of psychedelics — visionary drugs and plants. This method of learning has one great advantage: the experience has a beginning, a middle and an end. This means that, no matter how difficult my passage through a particular interior place may be, I know there will be an end to the fear or anxiety. As the effects of the drug wear off, I will find myself inevitably rediscovering my normal life and all the familiar, reassuring ways of being in that life.

The same can be said of the numerous other methods by which a person may pursue a deliberate path of spiritual exploration and learning. Most exercises taught by such methods have a beginning, middle and end, allowing for a predictable return to everyday life and awareness.

Let me take a moment here to say that, of the many inaccurate, uninformed and just plain wrong things that have been said about visionary or psychedelic drugs, the two most often heard are that they are addictive and that they are "escapist."

As to the first untruth, there are no known psychedelic drugs that cause physical dependence or addiction. There are, of course, many people who might be called "addictive personalities," and they tend to become psychologically dependent on any number of things, from food to gambling, but generally speaking, the psychedelics do not cause any kind of addiction or dependency.

As to the claim that the psychedelics are escapist drugs, I can say this: there are, indeed, moments of intense beauty and wonder as well as the occasional burst of laughter to be had during a psychedelic experience, but I have never gone through one that didn't involve some work.

I don't mean to imply that "escaping" is in itself wrong or destructive, if done occasionally and in balance with other aspects of one's life. After all, listening to music can be called escape; so can watching television, making love, reading a book, or taking a walk under the stars. All these can be thought of as escapes, especially if your view of life and what you call reality is generally grim and sour.

The young college-age psychedelic users who take drugs at rave dances might be said to be using them for escape, rather than for psychological or spiritual work. This is certainly not the highest and best use of these drugs, in the opinion of some. I'm not so sure. For many of the dancers at a rave, the combination of trance-inducing music and a (usually) low dose of MDMA, for instance, or LSD, creates an emotional openness and a sense of psychic participation with their fellow dancers. They sometimes experience a degree of euphoria which is absolutely unknown in their everyday lives. There is some question as to whether this state is induced as much by the trance-dancing as by any drugs they might have taken, but whether it is or not, I believe that euphoria is good for you, especially when it is achieved at no cost or pain to anyone else.

Most of the dancers at rave parties have spent a good part of their lives living in big cities, and they are not used to trusting or feeling affection towards strangers. In fact, life in most of the world's big cities, as a rule, demands continual caution and suspicion when one is outside the home. For some of these young adults, the only time they can let anxiety and fear of the stranger drop away is at a rave. There, they can experience trusting fellowship with many others, in a dancing situation which threatens no one and can, instead, open their hearts and give them a feeling of pleasure, companionship and hope.

As far as I'm concerned, none of this adds up to a threat to society.

Psychedelic exploration, for me, has always meant working, trying to come to terms with some aspect of my interior universe that makes me uncomfortable; dealing with insights into my own past or present behavior which may be disturbing; trying to dig out answers to basic questions about the nature of the world, the cosmos and whatever it is we call God. I have had well over a thousand exposures to these particular chemical tools. Escape is precisely what they have never given me, and my return to consensual reality — so-called ordinary life — has always been a pleasure, no matter how positive the psychedelic experience. But, then, I am blessed in having a good life to return to. For those whose everyday lives are not happy or fulfilling, the psychedelic experience can serve to renew their sense of meaningfulness and put them back in touch with wonder and joy.

## INFLATION

### (THE PRIESTESS)

I can still remember vividly the day I stepped into the inflation place. Shura and I were home on the Farm, and most of the research group was with us; only Dante and Ginger were absent. The experimental material was 2C-T-8, (which is short for 2,5-dimethoxy-4-cyclopropylmethylthiophenethylamine), and I had taken 42 milligrams about half an hour before. In previous trials, I had taken 35 mgs. and 40 mgs. and found it generally friendly.

(For most researchers, this material was not one of the great favorites; a few reported having had a hard time with it, but it hadn't given me any particular difficulties before the time of this experiment, aside from dampening erotic response in both Shura and me. One researcher loved it, since under its influence she produced more expressive and dynamic paintings than usual.)

This may be the moment to emphasize that the drug or visionary plant does not, in itself, contain any particular experience; each psychedelic

drug simply makes it possible to open interior doors through which that experience might emerge. The doors opened by DMT tend to be quite different than those opened by mescaline, for instance, but once you are through those doors, what you encounter is part of yourself.

Our group had already gone through the ceremony of gathering in a circle, clinking glasses and blessing each other, and each of us had wandered off to find the right place in which to ride out the transition phase.

Ruth and George were on the couch, holding hands, as they often did during this stage, especially with a drug that was new to them. John was moving slowly through the house, hands in his pockets, peering at book covers, pausing to look at a bunch of daffodils in a vase. I found David seated at the dining room table, talking to Shura about their favorite subject and mutual passion — chemistry — and I saw through the dining room windows that Leah and Ben were heading down the path which leads to the old cow barn, their fingers interlaced.

Having walked through the house long enough to reassure myself that nobody was having problems, I did what I usually prefer to do during transition, whether the drug is an old friend or a new one: I looked for a place to be by myself.

I stepped outside and closed the front door quietly behind me. The air was fresh and sweet, tasting the way it does only in early spring. I walked down the short dirt path to what we call the barbecue patio, a half-circle paved with red bricks, set against a slope planted with ivy and geraniums. On the low brick wall at the bottom of the slope, I found myself a place, brushed a few twigs and leaves off the surface and sat down. Before me was a wide view of hills, still green after the winter rains, dotted with live oak trees. Looking beyond the hills, to the north, I could see the faint brown line of a fog-blurred horizon and, above it, the pale blue of the sky.

I straightened my back briefly, stretched both arms skyward, and relaxed again into a comfortable slump.

*Well, no question; I'm feeling it. Lots of body energy; foot wants to tap. Whole body wants to tap! Okay, though, so far.*

I reached into a pocket of my long grey-blue caftan, brought out a pack of cigarettes, and lit one. I kept my gaze focused on the curve of hill across the highway from us, where a large cluster of trees glowed like dark sculpture against a background of bright green.

*Better appreciate that color while we still have it; any moment now, the yellowing of the grass will begin, and after a while it'll be hard to remember how beautiful the hills were in spring.*

The sensation was on me before I had a chance to track it from its beginning as a burst of euphoria, deep in the gut. Suddenly it was there, radiating through every cell — pure power; I was sitting upright on a low

brick wall, energy pouring into me, filling me. It brought with it a quieting of the desire to move around, tap feet, squirm on my ledge. The energy pulsed softly, and all of me was open to it.

I was full of strength and knowing, infinitely wise.

I sat quietly, radiating light and energy, noticing that, although my mind was suffused with something you'd have to call intense pleasure, each thought was distinct and clear; there was no confusion anywhere in my head, just as there was no illness or weakness within my body.

*Oh, my everlovin' God! This is what's meant by a bliss state. I'm a body of energy; my mind is like crystal; there's no question in the universe that I can't find the answer to. All I need in the world is myself, living in this serene rhythm, filled with livingness and knowledge.*

A tiny concern nibbled at the edge of the magnificence. What if somebody came out here to join me? Or even just to make sure I was all right?

*Don't want to scare people; I know anyone else coming out here would feel this power; it's too strong to be hidden. I'll have to gentle it out, somehow, if somebody turns up. Maybe I'll be lucky and no one will come.*

An image rose in my mind; it was the one and only thing I had left out of the description in PIHKAL of my first real psychedelic experience — with peyote — around thirty years earlier. I had considered including it, but somehow it just didn't get written, and I had finally acknowledged to myself that it still, after all this time, made me uncomfortable because it remained part of my dark side, and I still needed to keep an eye on it occasionally, especially during psychedelic sessions.

It had risen suddenly, clear on the mind's screen, during the early hours of the peyote day, while Sam Golding and I had been lying side by side on my bed. A few minutes before, we had both slipped into the full magic of the peyote world, and as I turned my head to say something to Sam, I saw an image of myself, seated on a throne, dressed in long robes — there was an impression of purple and blue — with a circlet of gold around my head. I was The Priestess, full of knowledge and power, seated above the rest of humanity, dispensing wisdom. It was a picture of supreme intellectual and spiritual arrogance, and although it was visible for only a few seconds, I had taken it as a warning: this was an aspect of myself that I had to keep under control.

Now, here I was, blazing with the fullness of this form of myself, knowing I needed nothing else and nobody else, and that I could continue being utterly sufficient unto myself — should I choose to stay in this place, in this state. I was complete.

*That's inflation. That's what my Priestess is. I disliked it — no, I hated it — all those years ago. I was ashamed of it. And now, here it is, here I am. I am*

*SHE, and the sense of wholeness, of utter fulfillment, is the most wonderful, delicious—I wonder if I can stay here forever, just basking, thrumming, swimming in this ocean of energy, my mind diamond dear.*

Somewhere, in the midst of the glory, a dialogue began. A part of me detached itself sufficiently from the radiance to ask questions and listen for answers from yet another part.

Q. What can possibly be negative about this place, this state?

A. Nothing. It's absolute heaven.

Q. Then why is there a faint uneasiness?

A. Because the Priestess is not what I've chosen to be.

Q. Why not?

A. Because she would have no use for anyone else in the world.

Q. What's wrong with that?

A. I prefer the version of me that likes people, interacts with the world, makes love with Shura; the one that mothers my kids.

This Priestess just isn't the person I want to become in this life. But, boy, does it feel GOOD! What a fantastic place to be in, even if only for a moment, and maybe only once; being a superhuman force, barely contained in a human body, does damn well have its points!

Q. So what are you going to do?

A. I'm going to get out of the Priestess.

Q. And you won't regret leaving all this behind?

A. Yes, I'll regret it, and I hope I can feel it again, just for a little while, perhaps. But it's pretty good, really, just being the usual me. And I enjoy relating to people, being a friend. I love Shura, and my children, and they like me being human.

Q. So we let the Priestess go. Goodbye, then, Great and Wonderful Lady! Hope to see you again, someday.

Now that the decision had been surely and firmly made, I was able to immerse myself in what was left of the euphoria, the energy, for a few minutes before there came a gradual softening of the image, a subtle, slow washing out of the magnificent state, like a vibrant watercolor painting being held under a fine misting spray.

Finally, feeling glowing streamers of the Priestess still clinging to my soul, I stood up and walked slowly toward the house, to reconnect with Shura and our friends.

Looking back on that day, the obvious question comes to mind: what would have happened if I had chosen to stay in the Priestess? I suspect that, within the hour, I would have found myself coming down, drifting out of that place, eventually understanding that I could not stay there forever.

In the meantime, of course, I might well have acted out of that archetype, to the considerable disturbance of the rest of the group—making pronouncements, delivering eternal truths, exercising my power and wis-



dom, and generally making an ass of myself. Even if I had experienced an hour or two of genuine inspiration, the expression of it would probably have caused no less discomfort to those around me. Playing the part of a seer — even for only a few minutes — isn't exactly the way to encourage your friends to feel relaxed and intimate in your company.

The Priest or Priestess is an archetype within the human unconscious, and I believe it's essential that it be experienced and worked through by anyone who wants to know all he can about the nature of his (and everybody else's) mind and psyche. The value of working through it is in the fact that it forces you to face the temptation, the seductiveness of that aspect of yourself. In gaining familiarity with it, you begin to understand, by contrast, the validity and value of the "normal," non-inflated personality you have developed throughout your life. This is the version of you that interacts and relates and listens to others, and admits to occasional mistakes, just like everyone else; the person you have chosen to be, who doesn't like arrogance in others, and certainly doesn't want to see it in her- or himself.

By "working through," I mean simply letting yourself go fully into the experience, enjoying the sense of power and wisdom and complete self-sufficiency. Resonate with it, let it fill you with its energy. If possible, go to some place where you can be alone; resist the temptation to communicate with others during the height of this marvelous state. Stay alone. After you've spent a bit of time enjoying the sensations and feelings, let yourself begin to pay attention to your Observer, the part of you that watches and keeps track and learns, but doesn't get swept away by feelings or emotions. This aspect of yourself will help to ground you, in the midst of the euphoria.

Recognize that this illuminated, powerful, totally self-sufficient being which you have become is valid, but it is only one version of yourself, and it is not what you have chosen to be in your everyday life.

Stay in the inflation place for a while, by yourself, then let it gradually subside. Understand that, seductive as it might feel, it cannot replace your usual, normal self, the one that has relationships, the one that is a social being, a friend, a sibling, a parent.

## CERTAINTY AND KNOWING

Absolute certainty, a feeling of knowing without any doubt what is true and not true about some particular thing, is a common experience to all adults. It's part of living, and ideally results from a process of questioning, testing, evaluating and eventually confirming.

The same feeling of absolute certainty, of complete conviction that your view of something (or everything, for that matter) is the ultimate truth, can and often does happen when you're under the influence of a psychedelic drug. It can be part of a state of inflation, as I've described above, or

it might be just a momentary burst of enthusiastic self-validation.

There is a real problem associated with this sense of "knowing," when it is part of a psychedelic experiment. It feels good (certainty usually feels good), but the trouble is that it also feels, at the time, like a genuine experience of Truth. Your soul has no doubt at all; there is no question that your evaluation of whatever it is you feel certain about fills you with a sense of absolute "lightness."

If it remains a feeling and only a feeling, it can be enjoyable — like any other aspect of inflation — and will do no harm. If you act on it, however, you might find yourself saying things to those around you (for instance, analyzing the personalities of your friends) which you may regret intensely several hours later, when the inflation-certainty wears off with the drug effect.

The rule has to be: under the influence of a drug, do not make a phone call, do not write a letter and mail it, do not make pronouncements about anything at all. Enjoy the feeling, and tell others around you that you are experiencing a delicious inflation, then either leave the company of your friends until the all-knowingness begins to mellow out, or stay with them and just keep your mouth shut and your strong, wise opinions to yourself. You will be deeply grateful later.

Now, here comes the really hard question. How can you know if your certainty about something, during a psychedelic session, is or is not actually valid? Can you ever trust that certainty, that absolute knowing? The only reasonable answer I can give is this: wait until you wake up the next morning, presumably at baseline, and review the certainties of the day before. If you have, indeed, arrived at some solid truths, or some new (to you) concepts that have validity, they will have lasted through the night, and you will be able to enjoy them all over again in the morning, only this time without the inflation, and presumably with your normal common sense and humor restored.

## THE VOID

This is one of the terrible places. While it takes different forms for each person, the essentials of the experience tend to be the same. I call it the Void, because it involves facing a total loss of any sense of meaning. If it comes to you as part of a psychedelic experiment, you're lucky, because it should pass within a relatively short time. If you are in the company of other experienced travelers, someone else is sure to be familiar with it and can help you make your way through. If it happens spontaneously — without any drug use — as it sometimes does out of the blue, it is not only extremely frightening, it might lead to suicidal impulses in a sensitive person because

whoever finds himself in this particular place is always convinced, at least temporarily, that what he is seeing and feeling is the basic truth about the world he lives in and the cosmos at large; that all life is absolutely meaningless.

This state of mind, if not drug-induced, is usually seen by the medical profession as a form of acute depression. If it persists beyond one day, and if there appears to be no progression towards some kind of resolution — a way out, a return to color and light — you should seek psychiatric help as soon as possible, because there are medications that will bring you back to normalcy. Keep in mind that acute depression is most probably the result of chemical imbalance in the brain, and can be treated.

If you have taken a psychedelic or visionary drug and find yourself in the Void (which has also been called the Sorrow Place or the Valley of the Shadow of Death) where everything feels gray, dirty and senseless, and the only emotions you experience are sorrow and total hopelessness, you must remember: it is *not* the final truth about the universe you live in; it's a genuine part of what is, but only a small part. It is no more the complete truth about life than Adolf Hitler and Vlad the Destroyer are the complete truth about the nature of the human race.

The second thing to remember is that you have no obligation to stay in this dark place. You have to know that it exists, and you should get the smell of it, for this reason, among others: a large number of people all over the world find themselves, perhaps for days, but sometimes for years, stuck in that hopeless, meaningless state, with no mental health professional or spiritual advisor available. You might find yourself able to be of help to some of them, if you know the territory and have found your way out of it.

One way to get free of this place is by focusing intently on certain images: perhaps the Laughing Buddha, or your favorite mental picture of Jesus the Christ, newborn babies being welcomed and adored by their parents, your own loving of your mate or your children, the music you like to hear, the deep pleasures of planting and harvesting, or whatever else you can remember of the beauty and joy in life. Concentrate on one of these, or let all of them parade through your mind, to the exclusion of everything else. See them clearly, your chosen good images, give them power by saying Yes to them, with all of yourself; let them radiate light within you. The Void, the hopeless place, will begin to disintegrate, color will gradually replace the dull grey, and meaningfulness will return.

Everybody's definition of "meaning," or "meaningfulness," is a bit different. My own is this: "meaningfulness" is the sense that everything that exists has a purpose, that there is a great story being told throughout the universe, and that each of us — along with every other form of life — is playing an important part in that story.

## PARANOIA

This unpleasant state often strikes people who experiment with marijuana; some (myself among them) do not outgrow this particular effect of the plant, and simply have to avoid exposing themselves to it. However, it can occur with any psychedelic or visionary drug. A single experience of paranoia under these circumstances can be of great value to you. For one thing, to be rather obvious about it, you'll know first-hand what is meant by paranoid thinking. You'll probably emerge from the drug effect with a greater understanding of what is called psychological "projection," and — ideally — an increased interest in understanding the deep-seated reasons for the shift that your mind took into distrust and suspicion.

If you find yourself feeling paranoid during a psychedelic experience, whether the drug involved is marijuana or something else, there are certain things to keep in mind. First, if you are seeing menace or hatred in the faces of people you know and love, try to activate your Observer, the part of you that watches, learns, and evaluates without emotion (although it does, at times, have a subtle sense of humor). The Observer is always present; remember it's there for you to use, and you must call it in. It should tell you something like this: "You have taken a drug, and it's changing your perceptions. Don't get trapped in this negativity and distrust. It's a part of your psyche, it's an aspect of your Survivor — the corner of your soul that assumes it's still living in the jungle, and senses danger everywhere — and what you're seeing has nothing to do with the truth about your friends or how they feel toward you; it has to do with projections from deep within your unconscious mind. Just ride It out, and it'll fade in a while."

Naming the state as paranoia does help you regain objectivity. No matter what drug you've taken, you may simply have to wait until it wears off, remembering not to act on the suspicion and fearfulness, reminding yourself continually that it's all the effect of a drug which is not friendly to you, and which you may not want to experiment with again. Also, consider the possibility that you are experiencing a one-time-only (it is to be hoped) exposure to a certain potential within all human beings to see their surroundings as dangerous.

If you are perceiving hostility in faces looking at you, or words said to you, remember that the perceived anger or disapproval — whether you feel it coming from people or trees or, for that matter, the sky — is a projection upon the outside world of negative judgements made upon yourself, tucked away in the unconscious mind. In other words, some part of you has learned, probably in childhood, to regard yourself as undesirable, bad, worthy of punishment, or worse. This is what you are seeing in the hostile faces of your friends or the menacing plants in your garden: a projection of the feelings of that judge and jury you have residing deep

inside you.

Allow the paranoia to become a teaching about that part of your psyche and, when the drug session is over, discuss with others what you experienced. If the feeling of paranoia disturbed you with its intensity, perhaps consider going into therapy, if you can, to dig up that self-destructive unconscious programming and to consciously put it to rest.

## SELF-HATRED

For certain psychedelic explorers, there seems to be an early stage during which the overwhelming sense is one of self-rejection; in some cases, the strength of the negativity can be extreme enough for it to be called self-hatred. For these people, it can happen with a number of psychedelics, though seldom with all, and is usually part of the transition phase (from ingestion to full effect).

Again — as with paranoid thinking — self-observation and simple logic can help get you through it. Your Observer should be able to tell you (if you'll listen), that this kind of focus on only the warts, only the failures and inadequacies, is not coming from a perspective of balance and fairness, but from some part of you that has been programmed — probably by parents, peers, or other authority figures in your childhood — to make harsh and unforgiving judgements of yourself.

The question you must ask yourself, persistently, is: would I judge a good friend with this much implacable negativity? And if I wouldn't pass sentence on a dear friend this way, why am I doing it to myself? Where is compassion, understanding, patience, and just plain love? Don't I deserve as much of these as any friend of mine?

Watch and listen to the words and phrases you're using against yourself, and ask just where this hostility could have come from. Where did you learn it, and how can you supplant it with love, humor and tolerance for yourself?

In most psychedelic sessions, this stage passes within the first hour, and what takes its place is usually a mellow, good-humored self-acceptance. But it is because of the possibility of an eruption of childhood-programmed self-condemnation, or its cousin, paranoia, that your first experiment with a new (to you) psychedelic drug should always be in the company of an experienced guide, usually called a "babysitter." There should be someone present who can spot trouble and move in with sympathy and common-sense, to diffuse the potentially damaging self-rejection.

And by "potentially damaging," I mean that, in the case of self-hatred, if it is overwhelming and intense enough, and the researcher is not experienced, there can be an impulse to self-destruction. The damaged self-

image is believed to be the ultimate truth, and no human being can tolerate living with an image of himself that is everything he hates and loathes.

Suicide is not liable to be a threat in the case of a person who is experienced with various psychedelics, because he's already gone through some version of this self-rejection and he's probably done some insight work and has come to understand this kind of eruption of self-loathing. It happens, in one form or another, to many people who experiment with psychedelics. The experienced traveler is certain, or has a pretty good idea, where the negative program originated, and he knows that it isn't even remotely the real nature of his soul. Experience has taught him that, if he gives himself whatever compassion he can and a little time, the dark state of self-hatred will dissipate and he'll find himself where he wants to be, possessed again of a sense of balance and humor and love for the totality of who and what he is.

The value of going through this horrible place is in coming face to face with childhood conditioning which has remained unconscious until opened up by the drug. Only when you are forced to acknowledge what you've been taught to believe about yourself, (almost always by parents and almost always unwittingly), can you begin the work necessary to the eventual transformation of your inner Beast into a Prince or Princess.

### THE OCEANIC EXPERIENCE

This is also known as *participation mystique* in the words of the great Mircea Eliade. It's as hard to find the right name for this state as it is to do it justice in words. For the serious explorer, it's usually one of the first places he'll find within himself. This experience will probably make a permanent change in his way of seeing his world, particularly his natural surroundings. I've discovered recently that I'm not the only psychedelic traveler who takes for granted that the beginning of the modern ecological awareness movement was not in Rachel Carson's important, ground-breaking book, *Silent Spring*, but in the psychedelic experimentation of the 1960's.

Young people who take psychedelic drugs solely for the purpose of partying and dancing at raves may indeed experience some of the heart-openness and warmth of feeling, empathy with others, and visual fun and games associated with some of these drugs, but they might not undergo the oceanic experience in its fullest, most complete form. For that place to open, it seems best to have quietness, both inside and outside, and to be in natural surroundings. However, there are no firm rules about the human psyche; if it is time for the oceanic experience to happen, it will happen, no matter where one is.

This state is characterized by a sense of connection — emotionally and spiritually — with all other living things, including the body of the

planet itself. It is a place of exquisite joy; you feel immense gratitude for being alive and able to participate in an extraordinary natural system which is suffused with wisdom and an all-encompassing love. All plants, animals and insects appear as contributors to an immense tapestry of life, of which you yourself are a treasured and essential part.

There is a rare (at least, among the people I know) and more profound form of this experience which may involve you first in sorrow, before you are healed by joy and love. The sorrow is that of all living things caught in pain, fear and loss, everywhere in the world, and you will find yourself participating in their emotions, feeling what they feel, while simultaneously experiencing your own agonizing pity and compassion. After being in this place for a time, you will begin to be aware of an immense, boundless love permeating everything that exists, and with it, a growing sense of joy/euphoria/bliss. This bliss state does not negate the suffering you have participated in; it includes and contains it. You may find yourself on a cosmic knife-edge, with your soul balancing between vast, deep darkness on one side and an infinite stretch of light on the other. It is here, I believe, on this knife-edge inside us, that laughter is born.

One of the lasting effects of this experience is a sense of the livingness of everything around you, the *dearness* and even sacredness of all forms of life, including those you have never personally liked, and an abiding respect for them and their right to exist alongside you on the Earth.

The oceanic experience has happened upon people unexpectedly, without the aid of drugs or any other tools, probably from the beginning of our species. It is a deeply spiritual alteration of consciousness, and I have never heard or read of anyone who has regarded it as other than a priceless gift, even when it has happened without warning or anticipation. The poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay, described the more complete form of it in her superb poem, "Renaissance." Here are three brief passages from different parts of a very long work:

"...I saw and heard, and knew at last  
The How and Why of all things, past,  
And present, and forevermore.  
The universe, cleft to the core,  
Lay open to my probing sense...

"No hurt I did not feel, no death  
That was not mine; mine each last breath  
That, crying, met an answering cry  
From the compassion that was I...

"The world stands out on either side  
No wider than the heart is wide;  
Above the world is stretched the sky,  
No higher than the soul is high.  
The heart can push the sea and land  
Farther away on either hand;  
The soul can split the sky in two,  
And let the face of God shine through..."

I believe that it is impossible for a person who has found himself in this place of the soul to ever again think of a tree as just another "crop;" to deliberately set out to kill *a* wild animal without sending to that animal a conscious thought of respect and regret at having to take its life; to consider building a house without first listening to the sounds of insects and birds and the rustling of small ground animals in the field he is planning to invade.

To such a person, the news of the extinction of yet another species of animal or plant — however inevitable — brings a wave of regret bordering on sorrow. He knows that species have been born and later extinguished countless times in the history of this planet, long before man came along to accelerate the process, but he feels the loss as he would the death of a fascinating acquaintance whom he had hoped to get to know more intimately.

The person who has been in this place knows to his marrow that he is part of nature, not separate from it, and that the Earth itself, the great body beneath our feet, is a living entity with a consciousness all its own, of a kind far different from anything that can be understood intellectually. He has felt the edges of that planet-consciousness, so he knows that some part of his psyche is connected to it, and that this is true of every living thing in the world.

If you find yourself opening to this experience, whether it begins with suffering or goes directly to love and bliss, you will not need your Observer at all, because the entire process is a gift of Grace, and you will recognize it as such by the time it ends.

### SYNAESTHESIA

For people who experiment with psychedelics, this can be one of the most impressive and enjoyable aspects of the experience. The definition of synaesthesia in one dictionary is: "A sensation produced in one modality when a stimulus is applied to another, as when the hearing of a certain sound induces the visualization of a certain color." Under the influence of



most psychedelic drugs, not only can music present itself to the listener in all shades of color, in all degrees of brightness and subtlety, but the reverse can also be true; colors can translate themselves into sound. There are sometimes such exotic interpretive changes as feeling emotions as textures, and intellectual concepts as three-dimensional shapes. Synaesthesia sometimes occurs in dreams, without any drug having been involved. It is something that all human minds do, usually unconsciously, and synaesthesia underlies all forms of creativity. Poets, artists and musicians may have experiences of synaesthesia while they are focusing intently on their work, probably because the creative experience usually involves an alteration of consciousness, a trance state. The taking of a psychedelic or visionary plant simply makes this interweaving of sensory modalities apparent to the conscious mind.

Many years ago, shortly before the birth of my first daughter, I had a Big Dream (the kind that C. G. Jung defined as a powerful, impactful dream which awakens the dreamer when it ends, and stays in memory for a long time, often for life). In my dream, I was standing in a garden, looking up at a tall, slender golden column. At its top, the column flared out to become a shallow bowl. Within that bowl I could see what I knew to be flower-fruits; round, succulent fruits with red, coral and purple colors, which were also, simultaneously, flowers. There was no division or difference between the two expressions of the plant; they were flower-fruits. To put this image in context, the rest of the dream involved my about-to-be-born daughter, who appeared as a young woman named Ann (which I of course named her when she arrived). The entire dream was vivid, detailed and extraordinary, but my amazement — when I woke up — was at the ability of my dreaming mind to accept without difficulty the merging of two states of plant life, flower and fruit, which is exceedingly hard to do when awake.

It is possible to get the intellectual *concept* of such a merging when one is awake, but only in a symbolic sense. In the dream — as in a psychedelic state — the experience is that *offeeling* the two as one entity.

The degree to which synaesthesia is experienced under the influence of a psychedelic depends on the nature of the drug, the dosage level at which the drug is taken, and finally, the receptivity and curiosity of the user; if he is inclined to explore new dimensions of his interior world, he will pay more attention to unusual and unexpected juxtapositions which may occur when his unconscious mind has the freedom to play these kinds of games with sensory input.

Here are a few excerpts from a letter written by a gentleman named DanJoy:

"Synaesthesia is rich, resonant and meaningful. And it is

everywhere. In cartoons, you have the wiggly lines signifying motions or the lines splaying out from a trumpet, signifying its blast, sometimes accompanied by little musical notes... Drug experiences and phenomena are inseparable from the matrix/spectrum of human mental, sensory, perceptual, cognitive, etc., experience — *not a* distinct, self-contained cluster of anomalies. The vocabularies used for the different sensory modalities overlap, revealing an underlying synaesthetic sense in our language. For instance, both sounds and colors have 'tones' and 'overtones,' as do emotions; sonic tones, like color-spectral ones, can be 'bright' or 'dark;' sound tones can be 'high' or 'low,' language which synaesthetically connects them also to the kinesthetic and visual-spatial sensoria. It is known that *smells* vividly awaken the full sensory spectrum of memory, synaesthetically inclusive of visual, auditory and emotional aspects. All the 'separate' sensory channels, after all, feed into the same brain."

Synaesthesia produces a sense of *pleasure* in everyone I know who has experienced it. The human psyche seems to enjoy this melding of the senses. There are some people in this world who live with synaesthesia all the time; they apparently consider themselves among the luckiest human beings on the planet. I'm sure there are synaesthetic experiences which are dark and frightening, perhaps in nightmares or certain schizophrenic states, but I have never personally heard or read of such negative kinds of synaesthesia. For me, this is a place of great enjoyment and soul-satisfaction. Furthermore, it gives rise to a multitude of questions about the nature of the reality we perceive, or think we perceive, and the workings of our brains, minds and souls.

## LAUGHTER

Anybody who has enjoyed marijuana has had the giggles, and — since for most users marijuana is a social drug — he has probably been through one of those hilarious sessions where everything seemed tremendously funny to everyone involved, and people were laughing about the smallest, silliest remarks or events until they were gasping for breath. Marijuana is famous for inducing this kind of hilarity, but it can happen to users of other psychedelic drugs, particularly psilocybin, and often does. It may have something to do with the release of the usual social constraints which hinder most adults — at least in our western culture — in their

expression of a good many of their feelings. Under the influence of these drugs, not only are repressed sorrows and angers sometimes released, so is humor and laughter.

Most of us have a lot of laughter inside us, but after childhood, we in the West learn to keep it to ourselves a good deal of the time. We let it loose — along with our sense of the ridiculous — when we've had some drinks which relax us, or a psychedelic which can serve the same purpose. And no matter how silly it may seem in retrospect, a bout of real laughter can strengthen the immune system, among many other good things, and should be treasured.

The question always comes up, eventually: what is laughter? It's a strange, choppy, spasmodic physical response to humor. So what is humor? A baby, when startled by a clown doll popping out of a box, will cry. The older child learns to suppress the startle response in favor of allowing something new and interesting into her world; she laughs and reaches out to grab the clown, to feel it and chew on it. Laughter, in child or adult, sometimes seems to be the result of this very rapid shuttling between fear and pleasure, or Yes and No.

But there are many kinds of laughter: bitter, sarcastic and cruel, as well as joyful and celebratory. The physical response may be basically the same, but the emotions that give rise to dark laughter are despair and anger, or simply the need to assert power and control. When we talk about "humor," or "laughter," most of us are thinking of that explosion of champagne bubbles that rises through stomach and chest, triggering an irresistible urge to open the throat and mouth and emit the odd staccato sound that expresses our pleasure.

The Laughing Buddha is an archetype, an illustration of what it is to stand on the knife-edge between Dark and Light, Death and Life, and to survey the universe from there. This is cosmic laughter, half pain and half bliss. One doesn't have to be a Buddha to know that place; it's inside every one of us mortals, and all that's needed is the willingness to open the door and step through.

## THE BETH STATE

Shura's name for this rare place is the Beth state, but it could also be thought of as a long-lasting threshold. We have experienced it only with a drug called Aleph-7, and Shura often wonders if it is exclusively a property of that particular material. Or, to put it more accurately, perhaps Aleph-7 is the only drug that opens that particular door in the psyche. And then again, perhaps there are others we don't know about.

His notes include the following: "Slow start at one hour, quiet.

Walking feels strange at three hours and twenty minutes; a feeling of something impending, but there are no handles, no way to place the intoxication. At four and a half hours, transition to a more familiar altered state, quite pleasant. The previous hour or so not unpleasant, just without definition."

In summary, the Beth state is one in which you are aware of being in an altered state of consciousness, but you can't pin down exactly how you know, since there are no visual changes, no emotional stimulation, no colorful patterns appearing in the mind, no nuthin'. And there it stays, and there you stay, for three to four hours. At least, that is the case with Aleph-7. It must be remembered, though, that if any single drug can elicit such a response as the Beth state, it means that the capacity for experiencing the Beth, for finding oneself in such a place, is intrinsic to the human mind. The only negative that could possibly be associated with the Beth place is the fear of dying of boredom.

## FLOODING

This can be one of the consequences of taking too high a dose of a psychedelic drug. It can also happen at a perfectly reasonable dosage level, but it is far less likely. You find yourself bombarded by a torrent of images, concepts and connections, all coming at you from your friendly neighborhood cosmos. The details of the experience will vary, of course, with every person who finds himself in this particular place in the mind, but the general feeling is one of being flooded by meaningful connections between everything in the universe and everything else. An experienced traveler, knowing that this, too, will pass, might manage to relax and enjoy the complexities of the onslaught, but to the naive experimenter, it can be overwhelming. The ego, the sense of core identity, might be hard to maintain; the sense of Self might be lost in the roaring noise of continual, intense input.

If you find yourself in this state, remember first of all that it's temporary. If you find it impossible to relax and swim with the roaring river, or simply need to recover your sense of identity and a bit more control over the experience, open your eyes (if you had them closed), then stand up and, start moving around, trying your best to focus on what your body is doing. Watch yourself walking, and talk to yourself, using your Observer to remind you of who you are, what your immediate situation is, and what you are attempting to do. Something like this might result: "I am Jacob Smith, I took so-and-so milligrams of Whatchamacallit approximately an hour and a half ago; I'm being flooded by too much information and I am attempting to get grounded by having this silly conversation with myself."

If you can manage to see humor in anything you're experiencing,

and especially if you can smile or laugh at yourself, you've won your battle. You may have hours of relative unease and mental overload still ahead of you, but if you can feel even the slightest little spurt of humor, you've recaptured the thread that will lead you back to your Self. When you can feel your own presence, when you can say to yourself, "I'm here, I'm ME," (never mind good grammar) your fear of dissolving into your surroundings, of losing track of your own existence, will gradually subside.

What you should be aiming for in such an experience is this: maintaining your sense of identity, your knowledge that you are a being distinct from other beings and from the world that surrounds you, while allowing the images and concepts and energies that are bombarding you to be what they are, to go where they are going, to flow through you and past you. After a while, everything will begin to soften and quiet, and the crashing flood of information will eventually become a trickle. One of the things you may be left with from this experience will be a new appreciation of what it means to live your life with a goal, a focus, an intent of some kind to help channel your energies and thoughts.

There's been much written over the years about the spiritual benefits of having your ego dissolve, of becoming part of the cosmos, of losing your sense of Self and experiencing the River of Life, the flow of universal spiritual energies, without the encumbrance of that separate identity, that "Me and I" thing, that terrible Ego, so beloved of individuals in the Western world.

I'm not comfortable with the way that concept is usually stated. For one thing, whose definition of "Ego" is being used? If what is meant is the "persona," the social face that all of us develop — and sometimes mistake for the real person inside — then yes, I couldn't agree more; anyone who wants to develop as a human being, as a soul, must be able to let the persona drop away at will.

But the Self, the core of you, the kernel of continually moving energy that is your essence, is not a burden. It's a piece of God, as tiny as a molecule and as large as infinity. It isn't necessary, I believe, to lose touch with it, in order to have the experience of dissolving into the stream of life; it should be your anchor, the place from which you launch into the interior cosmos, and the place to which you return.

There's a difference between an experience of overload or flooding, and one of mystical participation. Your instincts tell you when it's overload; you feel under attack, overwhelmed by too much, too much, and unable to learn anything of value (except, of course, that your dosage level of the drug was probably too high).

On the other hand, the experience of mystical participation, the oceanic experience — whatever you choose to call it — comes as a natural

unfolding of the soul, deep and sweet, and often unaccountably familiar.

Again, and yet again, the experience that I call flooding is another reminder of why experienced researchers in the area of psychedelics always try to have another person, a babysitter, present, especially when trying a new level of a compound.

If flooding happens spontaneously, without a drug being involved, and if it lasts more than 24 hours, you may need professional help. Most psychiatrists will treat this as a form of psychosis, and will medicate you heavily. This may be appropriate if you are really overwhelmed by the input and get into a panic, but if the input is tolerable and can be handled by other means, keep in mind that anti-psychotic drugs make it impossible to process such an experience or to learn anything from it.

If you find yourself in this state, having taken no drug at all, you should get a friend to be with you, right away. With the friend's help, locate someone in your vicinity who is a spiritual guide of some kind; a priest or minister or a Buddhist teacher. If you happen to know of an older psychedelic explorer who has not only experience but also some degree of wisdom — a wise elder, in other words — ask that person to help you.

This state of being flooded by more information, more connections and concepts than you can handle, can teach you about that place in the psyche. It can also make clear to you why, as a human being, it is necessary for you to control the rate of that flow, at least to the extent that you can hold onto your Self, and give time to the exploration of a concept or series of connections. Only this way can you hope to learn something of value. In this case, at least, less is indeed more.

## TIME DISTORTION

This is one of the most common effects of a psychedelic drug. Almost all of these drugs cause changes in one's time-sense; most of the time, there is a feeling of time stretching, but there can also be an experience of the opposite, a compression of time. This is not usually disturbing to the traveler, with one very distinct exception. I have heard of first-time psychedelic explorers who found themselves trapped in what they were sure was eternity, with no way out.

One lady, living alone in the woods of Northern California, took LSD (dosage level unknown) for the first time, and had the terrible experience of being in a profoundly altered state forever. *Forever*. She did finally come down, to her astonishment and intense gratitude, but an eternity had passed during those hours of consciousness change. Understandably, she says she will never take a psychedelic drug again.

I know of only one way to avoid such an experience, and that is to

make sure that you take a relatively low amount of any psychedelic drug you haven't tried before. And when you are familiar with the drug, increase the dosage level very slowly, if at all. This is not an area in which being "macho" is advisable. You are experimenting with your own mind and with unknown levels of your own psyche, and it is best to go slowly and carefully, with great respect and humility.

If you do find yourself trapped in eternity, let your Observer remind you that it is a drug-effect, and that it will, indeed, come to an end when the drug wears off. In the meantime, make use of the state, in whatever way gives you most pleasure; writing notes, creating something of beauty out of clay or paint, sitting outside with growing things, and allowing yourself to look, listen and think. Keep reminding yourself that eternity, in this case, is temporary, and that you are experiencing a fascinating corner of your soul. Much can be learned from this experience about perceptions of time, about the nature of your Self, and about the extraordinary capacities of your mind.

## OUT OF BODY EXPERIENCES

The first problem I encounter, in trying to tackle this particular subject, is that of definitions. What is meant by an out-of-body experience? To the average scientist, for instance, a person trained in logic and what is called scientific thinking, and with no exposure to the world of the spiritual, the term OBE (out-of-body experience) is meaningless, because he has been taught to believe that the physical body is all there is, and the implication that one can have any kind of conscious experience separate from the body is ridiculous. To such a person, then, this whole discussion is meaningless. It is to others that these notes are addressed.

The expert on OBE's is generally believed to be Robert Monroe, who wrote the first books about the process, and founded an institute on the East coast of the United States to teach people how to journey out of their bodies at will.

There are many reports of OBE's under the influence of psychedelic drugs, but I have never had one, so I can't speak knowledgeably about it.

My stepson, Theo, had a classic OBE when he was in his twenties, unassociated with drugs. He used self-hypnosis (concentrating on a spot on the ceiling), and found himself floating above his bed, aware of a thin, strong life-line or umbilical cord connecting him to his body. From there, apparently without any fear or anxiety, he took off to find his girlfriend, who had gone with her family for the weekend to a cabin in the Sierras. He was there instantly, and observed her sitting on a small pier at the edge of a mountain lake. He took note of what she was wearing (a red sweater and blue jeans),

then flew up to what looked like a small cloud, at which point he knew it was time to return to home base. "I just followed the cord — and, yes, it was sort of vaguely silver — and Wham! I was back in my bod," he told me.

Needless to say (I mean, I wouldn't be telling the story otherwise), when he later asked the girl if she had been in that particular place on that day, wearing those exact clothes, she said yes, she had been and how did he know? He sidestepped the question gracefully by laughing and changing the subject.

Theo stopped doing hypnotically induced OBE's only after a brief experience one day, when he concentrated on his favorite ceiling spot and, once out, went sailing into his father's bathroom, at the end of the hall. He drifted over to the mirror and looked in. There were the cabinets, the shower stall, the small shelf with Shura's shaving gear, all faithfully reflected. The only thing missing was his own face. There was simply no Theo in the mirror at all. For the first time since he had begun experimenting with OBE's, he became frightened. "I went back to my body immediately," he told me, "That was too much."

## HALLUCINATIONS

In Appendix C of this book, Shura and I define a hallucination, and I will repeat that definition here, adding only two brief clarifications.

"An extremely rare phenomenon, in which a completely convincing reality surrounds a person, with his eyes open, a reality that he alone can experience and interact with. The inducement of hallucinations is a property that is commonly attributed to psychedelic drugs, but in reality is virtually non-existent in the use of such materials, unless there has been a massive overdose. In almost all psychedelic experiences undergone by normal, healthy people, using reasonable dosages, there is an awareness of real surroundings. Visual distortions are common, but they are not confused with objective reality by the subject; they are known to be visual distortions and appreciated as such. The delusional anesthetic drugs, such as scopolamine and ketamine, on the other hand, can and do produce true hallucinations."

Members of the medical (including psychiatric) community, being for the most part inexperienced in the use of psychedelic drugs, have gotten into the habit of using the word "hallucination" to describe an entire range of visual and auditory effects produced by such drugs, including many



which have nothing whatsoever to do with hallucinations.

The important distinction is this: if you have taken a psychedelic drug and are, for instance, seeing increased brightness of color and richness of texture, interesting faces in large rocks, or kaleidoscopic imagery on your ceiling, and if you remain totally aware of the fact that such visual enhancements are due to your having taken a drug, you are NOT hallucinating.

On the other hand, if you have taken a drug and see a pretty blue horse prancing across your living room carpet, and are convinced that everybody else in your vicinity can also see the horse; if you make no association between the blue horse and the taking of a drug, but are certain that what you are seeing is part of consensual reality, then you are indeed hallucinating. It is the conscious awareness of cause and effect — the taking of a drug and the seeing of a blue horse — that makes the difference between experiencing visual effects or visual changes and real hallucinations.

I have had one experience of visual changes occurring as the result of an altered state without any drug being involved. I was attending a most unusual meeting at the home of a famous psychic in the city of Berkeley, years ago. There were many people present, including a group that was the focus of everybody's attention that evening: about ten psychic healers who were there to describe their methods and problems.

Present with his recording equipment was a well-known expert on out-of-body experiments, Dr. Charles Tart. He had done ground-breaking work in a university laboratory, placing electrodes onto people who claimed to be able to travel out of body almost every night, while retaining conscious control and memory of the experience. Dr. Tart assigned each subject specific tasks to accomplish while out of body in the lab; one assignment, for instance, was to float up to the ceiling, where there was a small placard with a name or series of numbers on it, placed out of sight of the awake subject. The subject was asked to report back when she awoke in the morning, as to what she had read on the placard.

Dr. Tart was the first university professor to publish the generally positive results of such research, and he was at this meeting to ask questions and tape-record answers from the healers.

The proceedings were taking place in a very large room with a wooden floor, and most of us were sitting on floor pillows against the walls. Everyone was quiet except the particular psychic healer whose turn it was to report into the microphone. Along with everyone else, I was concentrating on what was being said, and learning a great deal from each account, especially about the ways in which these people protected themselves from taking into their own bodies the illnesses of their clients.

Finally, bladder pressure made it necessary for me to get up and pick my way carefully over extended legs and feet on my way to the bathroom. Once inside the little room, I sat on the toilet and looked around

me. To my surprise and delight, the shower curtain appeared to be rippling, the wallpaper was most certainly moving, and the faucets glinted with enthusiastic points of multi-colored lights. "Aha!" I thought, "What d'ya know! Never had this happen before. Maybe it's because of all that intense mental focusing. Wonder how long it'll last?"

Unfortunately, I was so impressed by this unexpected bit of fun and games that, when I returned to the big room, I lost my ability to fully concentrate on the continuing reports from the healers. By the time the meeting had broken up, all visual changes had disappeared, and things were back to normal.

In this case, I didn't think for one second that anyone else coming into that bathroom would see the movement of surfaces; I knew it was the result of changes in my own consciousness of a perfectly natural kind. Shura calls this, "Using the intellect as witness," and I call it using the Observer. When a person is having real hallucinations, his Observer has abandoned its post as reality checker, as witness, just as it does in the dream state.

If I had believed that the walls and shower curtain were really moving, and that the movements would be apparent to other people, i.e., part of consensual reality, it would have been an hallucination. I concluded then, and still do now, that it was a non-drug-induced alteration of perception produced by strong concentration; it was also thoroughly enjoyable, and I hope it happens again some day.

### THE KALI

This archetype is best known in India, where one can find numerous paintings which portray the Goddess Kali, wife of the God Shiva, usually as a grimacing black or blue female monster, wearing a necklace of skulls and dancing triumphantly on dead bodies. In one hand she brandishes a bloody sword; in the other, a bearded, severed head. Sometimes she is shown with four arms, the third carrying a trident and the fourth, a bowl which catches blood from the head.

In the book, *Dancing in the Flames*, by Marion Woodman and Elinor Dickson, (Shambhala Press, 1996) there are these comments:

"At first glance, Kali comes across as a fierce embodiment of the devouring mother, who gobbles up everything, even her own children. A closer look, however, reveals a great halo around her head.... The halo attests to Kali's status as Goddess, to her need to be understood not only as de-

vourer, but also as transformer. She is black, dark as the matrix, from which all creation comes and to which it returns. To her devotees, she is like a black sapphire; radiance shines through her blackness."

"The mystery of Kali is that she is perpetually destroying and, at the same time, creating — destroying in order to create, creating in order to destroy, death in the service of life, life in the service of death. Kali is time, immanence, ceaseless becoming, nature as process. For Kali, all experience is one — life as well as death."

She is also understood to represent ego-death, which certain spiritual teachings believe to be an essential step on the pathway to illumination.

I've had two glimpses of The Kali, both of them astonishingly different from what I would have expected, and each giving rise to profound questions.

The first time was many years ago. It was in early summer, and I had taken around 20 milligrams of 2C-B in the early evening, while Shura was in San Francisco at the Owl Club, playing his viola in the orchestra, as he does every week.

At one point I went outside, climbed the brick steps and headed for my car to get something I needed. When I left the car and started back across the pavement towards the house, it was dark, except for the glow from the dining room below, illuminating the patio. Halfway to the steps, I suddenly stopped and stood riveted, my mouth open. About fifteen feet above the ground, glowing brightly against a shadowy mass of trees, was a large oval of light; seated cross-legged in its center was the figure of a lovely young woman. Her skin was the color of cream. Both arms were extended, hands open, as if to say, "Behold this!" She was surrounded by parts of dismembered human bodies — arms, legs, heads — lying on the ground, stretching as far as I could see. There was blood everywhere. What radiated from the vision was a feeling I can only describe as bliss.

The whole experience lasted barely two seconds, but I didn't move until it had faded out of existence, leaving me staring at the black outline of trees.

I walked slowly towards the stairs, thinking furiously.

*What WAS that? With all those — those pieces of bodies and the blood, it MUST be The Kali. But I've never heard of a beautiful Kali; all the paintings show monsters. And that feeling; how can a scene of bloody carnage give off such a sense of rightness? And bliss? I don't understand.*

I knew that I had just witnessed something not only important, but

sacred, and that it was part of the answer to my obsessive inner questions about the nature of what we think of as good and evil. But I couldn't grasp what it meant.

I hadn't yet solved the mystery, hadn't come to any satisfying conclusions, when — seven months later — the second encounter occurred. Shura and I were making love one night. He had taken 120 micrograms of LSD; I'd taken only 80 micrograms, because at higher levels, LSD is not particularly my ally. I was doing dances with my tongue upon the body of my love, when I saw in my mind's eye two figures far away, dressed in red, against a background of light. They were embracing, and I knew instantly that they were Death and Life, and suddenly they had melted into each other and there was only one figure there, facing me, seated in a halo of soft light, her clothes the color of blood.

This time, also, the duration of the vision was two or three seconds, and it didn't fade, as the first one had, but simply ceased to exist.

*That's the level of the Gods. It isn't the human reality; we have to choose between the life force and loving, and the other side, The Kali — destruction and killing. How can that vision have any meaning for a human being?*

I turned my attention again to Shura, tucking away the memory of the figures in red until later.

It took some time for me to acknowledge that my immediate thoughts after the second experience had been simply avoidance, an effort to postpone the work I was going to have to do to comprehend what I had been shown.

Just a few weeks ago, I heard from a friend about her experience of another form of the female destroyer archetype. It had come to her in a dream, several years ago, and her description of the dream state makes it clear that this was a "Big Dream," one which is vivid, numinous and always remembered.

What my friend, Lara, saw in the dream state was the Goddess Pele, sacred to the Hawaiians; she is the goddess of fire and volcanoes, and she is also the patron goddess of the Hawaiian Islands. Pele appeared to Lara as a magnificent being with a river of lava flowing around her. She spoke, but what she said to the sleeping woman had nothing to do with destruction; it was about the sacredness of knowledge and the immense importance of continual learning while in human form. Then she showed Lara the creative side of her nature; she displayed the growth of new land that results from the cooling of lava after a volcanic eruption, and invited her to rejoice at the sight. Then the vision ended, and Lara awoke. "I lay there in the dark," she told me, "And I felt this great happiness, and I went over and over the memory of Pele and what she had said to me. It was astonishing, and I am still feeling so grateful to her!"

I have gradually come to understand that all the dualities in the cosmos spring from a single Source, as does everything else; that duality, the dance of opposites, is necessary for life to exist, in any and all forms. I believe that, although perceptions of these archetypes may be possible only when one is in the God-space, the expression of these dual forces informs every second of existence, whether of plant, insect, animal or human.

My intellect can comprehend all this, but my heart and gut still rebel at grief, fear, pain, injustice and destruction. To work through that rebellion, I have to remind myself of certain things. For instance, although the great forces that shape all life can sometimes appear to the soul as serenely implacable and without mercy or love, this perception is not the truth. The archetype of Kwan Yin, the Chinese Goddess of Mercy, is also within us, as are numerous other archetypal images of loving, nurturing, creative energies.

As a species, we have always taken sorrow and transformed it into music and art; we have used experiences of pain to deepen our empathy and compassion for others; even fear and horror have had their uses, teaching us strength and will.

What we strive for, whether through the use of consciousness-altering drugs and plants or meditation and spiritual training, is to reach — however momentarily — that place inside us where there is true comprehension of the great dualities, and with it, a state of immense energy, acceptance and bliss. The Indian word for this place is "Samadhi," and a single experience of it will give life-long strength to your soul and spirit.

We, after all, along with all other life-forms, are pieces of the Source, expressions of the Source, so everything we do and feel is done and felt by the Source.

I am not stating any of the above as ultimate truth, but only as what I have experienced and learned. Every human being contains all of these places in his psyche; what he does with them, how he puts them together into a whole view of the universe and his role in it, will be unique to him and must be respected and honored.

## EUPHORIA

The first thing that can be said about this experience is: it's good and nourishing, food for our souls. Euphoria belongs in all our lives, as often as possible, because it feeds us with energy and hope.

A dictionary will give you the following definition of euphoria, and when you've read it, think about the implications. From the Random House Webster's College Dictionary, 1991, I get this simple one: "A strong feeling of happiness, confidence, or well-being." And, as Shura has said, many

times, the prefix "eu-," means "normal," or "correct." The word, "euthyroid," means a normally functioning thyroid. The opposite of "eu-," is "dys-," which means something *not* functioning normally. For instance, "dysphoria," means abnormal, as opposed to "euphoria," which means feeling well, normal and good. Thus, "hyperphoria" could be bliss, and "hypophoria" could be depression.

So, how have we come to be a society in which euphoria means "feeling too good, happier than you ought to, more confident than you deserve to," instead of what it ought to mean? Why is euphoria listed in the Physicians' Desk Reference as a possible *negative* side-effect of various drugs?

I wonder if we are, as a society, becoming so used to being in a state of mild depression most of the time, that feeling well, happy and full of energy engenders, in some people, a certain amount of suspicion and even disapproval. Perhaps some of this comes from the early Puritan and present Fundamentalist Christian teachings that Man is a sinner and true happiness and bliss can be expected only in heaven, if you've earned your place there by living a life full of self-sacrifice and a lot of suffering.

I have experienced euphoria and its higher spiritual form, bliss, as an upwelling of thanksgiving to the Source, by whatever name it is called. The feeling I have when giving whole-hearted Thank You to the universe is identical to that felt in a state of euphoria. Some evangelical Christians in their worship services seem to experience the two states as one. Perhaps they are.

As with all emotions felt by human beings, euphoria does not last, cannot be present all the time, and is not meant to be constant. Unless you have worked your way through to becoming an Initiate, a spiritual master, (in which case it may be possible to live in a state comparable to euphoria), for the most part you will have ups and downs, sun and shadow, pain and exhilaration. All we can hope for, both for ourselves and those we love, is that all of us will have more moments of euphoria than sorrow, and that we will be able to renew our hope and excitement about life as often as possible.

The only negative I can think of in regard to euphoria is that certain people may try to find a way of making it a permanent state of being. With or without drugs, it cannot be maintained constantly by most of us, any more than orgasm can be. There are stories — legends — of people who have slipped into a bliss state and remained there for the rest of their lives; Saint Theresa of Avila, for instance. However, if you want to remain in the world of human beings, to live a human life, to change, learn and transform, euphoria must be looked upon as a temporary gift and a reminder of your innate capacity for exquisite pleasure.

Psychedelic drugs can help open a person to an experience of euphoria, just as they can open him to deep sorrow, empathy and humor, cosmic meaningfulness and total confusion. Again, it isn't the drug that creates the experience; it's the drug that opens doors to what is already resident inside the person.

For those of us who live in the western industrialized countries, daily life tends to be busy, stressful and not conducive to the practice of insight or the fullest possible openness to emotions. Adults learn to repress, hide and even deny feelings that are uncomfortable or painful. Unfortunately, this results in a repression of feelings that are entirely positive, along with the negative ones. When we put a lid on anger and resentment, we are also making it hard to feel joy, deep love and humor. Everything gets dulled.

In the psychedelic experience, we can discover a clear, open channel to feelings and emotions again. It makes us more vulnerable to the world around us, but without that vulnerability, we cannot feel out truth and we can never hope to grow wise.

## CHAPTER 11. SEX, DRUGS, AND THE OLDER PLAYERS

(Alice's voice)

It's Saturday night, and Shura and I have each taken 100 micrograms of LSD, a rather low dose — not enough to stun the mind with too much input, but quite enough to open up lovemaking. It's June, and a warm night, so we don't need to get under the covers. I lie down beside him, and he turns off the bedside lamp. Now there's only the light from the radio, but it's enough to see each other by.

Shura turns his head and smiles at me, his hair standing out from his head like a corona, glinting silver and pink and orange in the half-light.

I raise myself on one elbow, and say, "How about searching the dial, see what our choices are?"

While he switches from one classical music station to another, I stroke his back and watch little rainbows erupting in the wake of my hand. Suddenly, Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto brings a stop to the sampling of radio wares, and I give an approving pat to my favorite rounded portion of his anatomy, "Hey, we lucked out!"

Shura turns around, "Looks like it."

His hands move over my stomach and down one thigh, and I breathe out the breath I didn't know I was holding, as I let go of a week's concerns and frustrations. Most important of all, I'm letting go of fear that my body is not beautiful enough, not slim enough, not appealing enough. What grows in me — every time we make love — is a certainty that, in some way I can't understand with the self-critical part of my mind, Shura loves me anyway. Not despite, but including all the defects. It's easy for me to accept him, his body, the things that aren't perfect, but I'm always amazed that he accepts me in the same way.

What I love is the essence of the man inside, the male energy and its island of femininity. His body is the physical expression of his light and dark sides, sometimes in conflict and sometimes in balance, as is the case with all of us, I suppose.



We are affectionately amused by each other's less romantic signs of aging: the thinning of pubic hair, the rounding of tummies, the loosening of skin that was never supposed to be anything but taut and smooth. All of that, we gradually learn to allow in our own bodies, and love in each other's.

One of the things that makes it hard to see one's body getting older is that the soul, the sense of who we are, is never more than thirty-two or so. This is an uncomfortable thing for some people to hear, and they usually choose not to believe it, because it sounds too sad. They'd rather think that the spirit inside the shrunken, fragile grandmother lying against her pillows feels itself as ancient as her body. But it simply isn't so. And the idea of a young soul trapped in an old body isn't as tragic as it might sound. After all, aging happens very gradually, morning mirror by morning mirror, and after a while you learn to shrug resignedly at your reflection and avoid friends' cameras.

And there are compensations. In your thirties, you become aware that you are beginning to understand the rules of the game — the social, human relationship game. In your sixties and seventies, a new level of comprehension begins to make itself felt; occasionally, when you pay attention, you can hear the flow of life more clearly, sense it moving beneath and around you, feel yourself part of something immense and timeless, yet somehow intimately connected to you and everything you're doing and thinking.

Sexuality changes as we age. The body doesn't act or react the way it did twenty years earlier. If you and your lover have a good relationship you'll find that with the passing of the years, frequency is replaced by depth, subtlety and a new dimension of deliciousness. Love-making itself, the caressing and the imaginative uses of hands, mouth and tongue to play the beloved's body, whether or not there is final culmination, can become a pleasure undreamt of in the climax-driven world of the twenty-year-olds.

If you are familiar with certain psychedelics or visionary plants, and have experience in using them, love-making can become a truly multi-dimensional experience, sensuousness interwoven with spirit, jeweled images behind closed eyelids combining with the smell and feel of skin, and the orgasm flowering deep in the mind before it explodes — excruciatingly sweet and long — in the body.

But you should be familiar with the effects of the particular drug and be sure of the identity and quality of whatever you're using. The relaxing effects of certain psychedelic drugs may make it easier to find that erotic bud which can be urged into bloom, but it is important that you know enough about the effects of the drug to enable you to avoid taking too much. The reasons are obvious: with too high a dosage, the imagery filling the interior screen, and the conceptual complexities that may accompany them, could make it difficult to focus either mind or body on making love, if that

is what you had intended. The emotional and spiritual closeness that such a shared experience might bring about would certainly be its own reward, but if your intent is love-making, a modest dosage level will serve you better than a high one.

Later that night, I am in a shadowed cave where Benjamin Britten's music is water over rocks, falling into a dark pool. A fine spray rises from the bases of two huge, rounded stones which are smooth as sculptured buttocks. The music flows through my breasts, an edge of violins raising questions in silver shading to pewter, answered by a moss-green cello in the depths of the pool. Red light glows from somewhere behind me, and there are glints of red-gold in the falling water, then Shura howls long, long, and I am rising, past the great rocks towards the night sky.

I lift my head and smile up at him; his hand strokes my hair. We are silent, at rest, listening to the music.

## CHAPTER 12. THE LIONESS AND THE SECRET PLACE

(Alice's voice)

It was a long time ago when I had my first terror dream.

I had heard vaguely of "hypnagogia," and not at all of its twin, "hypnopompia." The first word is used to describe a state in which one is descending into sleep and, as normally happens, control over the physical body has been turned off, but for unknown reasons, the mind lags behind the body in descending into that particular altered state known as sleep. The second word, "hypnopompia," is a similar state experienced in the process of waking up.

In both states, the dreamer's mind, his ego, is capable of being self-aware, basically oriented as to identity, place and time — although this awareness may fluctuate — but he is not able to control his body or open his eyes. It is in this disconnected, limbo situation that certain kinds of vivid dreams, certain kinds of spiritual attacks, if you will, can take place.

I think of this strange state as getting briefly caught between two worlds, and I should note that my experiences have been only in going to sleep.

The first time I experienced a dream of this kind occurred while I was living with my little son, Christopher, in the Sunnysdale housing project, just below the city of San Francisco. I was around 21 years old, newly divorced, and my baby and I were very poor, as were all the residents of Sunnysdale and other similar low-rent housing projects (nobody lives in such places by choice, after all). I was used to being, emotionally, in the grip of something grey and hopeless that I couldn't define — years later, I realized it was called clinical depression — but, after all, that state of mind wasn't unknown to many of those living in the projects.

One evening, I had put my baby to bed in his little room upstairs, and was settling myself down on the living room couch with a book from the library, when my mother phoned. After we'd exchanged family news and talked for a while, she mentioned that, for reasons I can't remember, she

was memorizing Psalm 121, which begins, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." After we said goodnight, I opened up my old Bible to read the psalm, and decided I liked it enough to try to memorize it myself, which is something I often did in those days, with poems I particularly liked.

That night, as I lay upstairs in my bed, sprawled on my back in the dark, my mind beginning to drift, I became aware of a sound coming from the direction of the half-opened bedroom door. It was a sound of scratchy footsteps on the wooden stairs, and a surreptitious rustle of clothing, and I knew that there was a group of *things* on the stairs which looked much like the dwarves in fairy-tale books: small, chunky bodies, wearing ragged clothing and dark caps. I could see them in my mind. They were sneaking slowly up the stairs, and they intended to come into my room. Somehow, I knew their objective, which was quite simple: to cause me terror. They liked making human beings afraid. And they knew I was helpless.

From the moment I'd heard the first sounds, I had been trying to open my eyes. I knew that once I managed to do so, I would have control over the rest of my body. But I was stuck, just barely over that threshold which we all cross every night. My body was frozen, while my mind wandered, completely self-aware, in a strange territory which was not quite dream, but had some aspects of dream to it, such as sensing the general shape and size of my attackers, and knowing what they had come for.

As I lay there, my heart beating so hard it threatened to deafen me, I knew the first of the intruders was already through the door, and the group was continuing to edge ever closer, laughing silently at my panic. Then, the words of the psalm I had been reading rose in my mind, and I concentrated all my attention on them, saying them slowly and clearly in my head, "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." Suddenly, I had my eyes; they opened with a snap, and I could move my head, and then my hands. I breathed relief at being back in control of my body, flexed my fingers and smiled at the ceiling. Then I became aware that I was still hearing the rustling sound. I was fully awake, and by turning my head I could see an empty floor, but that menacing sound continued, gradually fading, in my ears for at least ten seconds.

I got up and went downstairs to make myself some hot tea, and sat on the couch with my cup and a cigarette, for a little while. I wondered what the intruders had been, whether they had — as I suspected — an independent existence on some unknown level of reality, and why they were so filled with malice. Why did they want to frighten humans? To what purpose? It never occurred to me, and it would not occur to me until ten or fifteen years later, that they just might be aspects of my own unconscious. And if it had, I would still have been completely bewildered.

I tucked my feet under me and curled my fingers, around the

reassuring warmth of the cup.

*At least I've discovered something immensely valuable: if I get stuck in that region, that kind of place again, all I have to do is focus my attention very strongly on words — words which have meaning for me. The Lord's Prayer, or a psalm, like tonight. That focusing of the mind gives me back control, and I can open my eyes.*

For a very long time afterwards, I had no more dreams of that particular kind. I ascribed this — when I thought about it at all — to the fact that I knew how to bring myself out of paralysis, and whoever the dwarf critters were, they knew I had the secret and wouldn't be quite so frightened of them next time.

Then, in the late 1950's, I had a series of three terror dreams on three successive nights. I was working, at the time, as a medical transcriber in the Department of Pathology, at the huge medical complex on a hill called Mount Parnassus, in San Francisco. I lived in a tiny apartment, just two blocks downhill from the medical center. I usually got to bed at around 10:30 p.m. on weekday nights, because I had to get up at 6:30 in the morning and needed as much sleep as I could get, in order to function properly in a demanding, stressful job.

The night of the first dream, I found myself again in a state of awareness, conscious of the fact that I had just slipped out of my body, and couldn't control any part of it, but had apparently stalled on the way to full sleep. And something was moving in on me. The image came of myself standing on the roof of a tall building, looking up with horror at a monstrous face, the size of a house, coming up the side of the outer wall. Its immense mouth, lined with rotten teeth, gaped open. Its eyes were closed, and it seemed to be trying to smell me out. (Much later, I came across the famous painting by Goya, "Chronos devouring his children," and shuddered at the resemblance.) While all this was going on, I was trying to open my eyes, remembering vaguely that I was supposed to concentrate on magic words, focus on them, to the exclusion of everything else. The trouble was, I also had to move as fast as I could, away from the edge of the roof and the room-sized, distorted, hungry mouth that was searching for me. I was too busy being terrified to focus on anything except getting off the roof and staying alive.

I could see no exit, but I was able to run behind a square metal box or vent of some kind, well out of the reach of the blindly searching creature. It seemed, finally, to get tired of the pursuit and began to slither downward, toward the street below. I knew I wasn't yet safe; the atmosphere was still heavy with menace, and it was then that I collected myself enough to begin reciting the Lord's Prayer. Within a few seconds, I could open my eyes, and the horror was over.

The following night, it all happened again. I was suspended, just

barely out of my body, unable to continue into sleep or to open my eyes. I was on a rooftop again, but this time something was coming toward me out of the sky: birds. Black birds, wave after wave of them, swooping low over my head. I knew they were birds of death; not omens, but actual embodiments of death. I recognized them as the birds flying over the field in van Gogh's last painting, the one he finished just before he killed himself.

I set to work as before, trying to open my eyes or lift a finger, to reassert control over any part of my body, while the malevolent birds flew closer and closer to my head. I did my best to ignore the terrified pounding of my heart, and concentrated on remembering the words of the Lord's Prayer, but what came into my mind instead was the gentle, familiar, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," and suddenly I was awake.

This time, although I had a workday ahead of me and needed my rest, I stayed up for half an hour, until something told me I wouldn't face danger again — tonight, anyway — if I tried to go to sleep.

The third night, there I was, unable to move, unable to open my eyes, helpless on my bed, and this time the attack was more direct, and there was no dream-world at all. I was lying on my back, and to my left, perched on the edge of the bed, were entities — I knew there were three of them — and they were doing something that seemed ridiculous; they were blowing air on me. One would blow a puff of air at my face, while the others blew on the skin of my arm, then there would be a brief pause, and they would do it again, watching me. The intent was exactly the same as that of the dwarf-like creatures, so many years before: to frighten me, to drive me into a state of helpless fear. They were small and evil, full of giggling maliciousness, and I was frozen, only inches away from them.

The fear, that night, was mixed with anger, and I tried to focus my thinking on some words that would get me out again, but this time, something completely new and shocking happened. I felt my neck muscles stiffen, and my head moved back on the pillow. My throat opened, and from it came a roar which originated deep in my solar plexus; it was directed at the creatures, and it kept going on and on. In that roar there was no fear at all, only murder. It was not a human sound, but it spoke an unmistakable message: "Get out of here, or I'll tear you to bloody pieces. OUT!"

(Later, I compared the way I had felt with being a lioness inside a cave with her cubs, roaring at a couple of small monkeys at the cave entrance, who had been making a nuisance of themselves.)

The visitors on my bed vanished. My neck muscles gradually softened, and the animal I had been slowly faded away, although her self-satisfied contentment lingered for a long time.

I could move my body again.

This time, I didn't get up to think about it. I knew, somehow, that

## The Lioness and the Secret Place

this was the last time I would be attacked. Whatever it was, whatever had been going on for three nights, was finished.

I was right. The terror dreams were over. But I was left with a puzzle, a mystery. What had been activated that last night? From what part of me had that lioness roar come? What could possibly have happened, except the obvious: I had become a powerful, fearless animal for just long enough to scare the hell out of some sort of disembodied spirit-creatures who had nothing better to do than try to terrorize a vulnerable human being caught out of body. That roar had said STOP, or I will destroy you! And it had stopped.

It would be almost four decades before I would begin to understand that inner lioness, and her equivalent — gorilla, wolf, jaguar — inside every human being, and the new kind of psychotherapy which would know what to do with that part of us.

For now, I had only a great wonderment, a feeling of awe at what had happened, and, underneath it, a sense of strength and satisfaction. I turned over on my bed and let sleep search me out again, feeling neither hesitation nor fear. I knew I was safe.

To this day, I have had no more killer or terror dreams, not a single one. I've had ordinary nightmares, and I've experienced lucid dreaming, but I've never again found myself trapped in that strange and vulnerable out-of-body place, heart pounding, fighting for my life. I think it's because an unknown part of me activated my own self-protective killer, my beast ally in the deep interior cave of the unconscious, and I know that I can reach for its help instantly, if attacked. It might not always take the form of a lioness, but that isn't important; the knowledge that it's my utterly loyal, immensely powerful ally is. When I became a therapist, for a while, more than 20 years later, I came to call this part of the human psyche the Survivor. Others call it the Power-Animal. It is an aspect of the human Dark Side, or Shadow, that exists solely for the protection of its host.

And the attackers, the entities that like to terrorize, what have I concluded they are — or were? Until I have evidence to the contrary, I'll have to consider them aspects of my own unconscious psyche, perhaps symbolic images of things I hate and fear. If, in truth, they actually emerged from elsewhere than my own interior, they may have been "elementals," beings inhabiting the usually unseen country of nature spirits, visible occasionally to small children and inhabitants of Ireland. Perhaps they are twisted with anger at the ruination of so much of the planet, and are able to take their revenge only when one of my species gets stuck in a not-quite-connected place on the way into sleep. Or out of it. But I can't bring myself to think of nature spirits as malignant, for any reason; sad, yes; malicious and sadistic, no. So for now, I will say that they weren't nature spirits. Until

I'm convinced otherwise.

Recently, I've come to suspect that the entire series of terror dreams was a set-up, orchestrated by my own psyche to lead my unconscious to activate the Beast-Survivor; to come to know and recognize it as the ally it is meant to be. In a later chapter, *The Intensive*, I'll have more to tell about this.

---

I'd never had a lucid dream in my life until a few years ago, when I went through an incredible experience which I wrote about in *PIHKAL*. It lasted a week, and involved an altered state over which I had no control, and during which I was taught a great deal. Some of the teaching was done in two lucid dreams.

Lucid dreaming means that you are conscious during a dream; you know that you're dreaming, and the ego is intact. The most obvious difference between lucid dreams and hypnogogic/-pompic dreams is that, in lucid dreams, you have control over the general direction and content of the dreams. If things become difficult, dangerous or undesirable, since you know it is a dream, you can choose to get out or change it. You're never trapped, as in the terror dreams, because you are completely and continually aware of the nature of the experience.

After the first lucid dreams, during that extraordinary week, I was tremendously excited that this had finally happened to me, and hoped it would happen again. Months after the first two dreams, I had another. In this one I found myself seated in the lotus position, arms extended on either side, floating above a desert scene. There were red stone cliffs beneath me, on my left side, and a sandy desert floor far below. The entire dream lasted only a minute, but during that time I experienced myself as a body of energy, emitting energy, pulsing with energy, and the energy was joy, wide-awake completion, bliss.

I remember waking for a moment and saying to myself, "That's what is meant by Samadhi."

Something new was added just during the past two years, in my experiences of lucid dreaming. In all my reading about various spiritual practices, I had never come across a description of anything like it.

What happened was this: I began having occasional lucid dreams in which I experienced intense sexual energy, but not in the usual place — not in my genitals; I felt desire and a drive to orgasm in a part of my body located immediately above the pubic bone. Exactly where you can feel a full bladder if you push inwards. The first time it happened, I drove myself by sheer will to orgasm, and when it came, it was the most intense one I had



ever experienced. In the dream, I was conscious and observant, and noted that there was no image of a partner, and no spiritualizing of the sexuality in any way; it was vivid and strongly felt, in a part of the body not usually associated with sexual impulses. The only reason for it happening at all — my instincts told me — was to re-affirm the strength of the life-force in my body and my soul. And to acquaint me with what is meant by an activation of the chakra (energy center) which is located right above the pubic bone.

This kind of lucid dream occurred every few weeks, and I always woke up afterwards. Sometimes I wasn't able to achieve orgasm, despite intense efforts to focus on that result; the lucidity would begin to slip away, and I would feel disappointment when I woke, usually attempting — without success — to go back into sleep to recapture the experience. But most of the time, the strange and marvelous dream would culminate in a glorious, completely selfish, self-affirming, body-shaking orgasm, comparable only to the best of those one can have making love under the influence of psychedelics, but even more piercingly intense, literally taking my breath away.

I shared all of this with nobody but Shura, although I wanted to find out whether it was known to others. But, whom can one ask? It might be considered, after all, a rather delicate subject.

Finally, I found the whom. Shura and I had met him about a year earlier at one of the pot-luck dinners we had every few weeks, at the house of my former husband, Walter Parr, to which people in the network — the consciousness and psychedelics network — would come to talk and make new friends. This gentle man, of medium height, with thinning blond hair and warm, amused blue eyes, introduced himself as "Karma Tendo," using his Buddhist name. When I looked a bit quizzical, he explained, "I know, I don't look Tibetan. Actually, I was born in London, but when I decided to study Buddhism, I changed my name. Okay?" I laughed and acknowledged that it did seem a bit unusual to see before you such a non-Oriental looking person and be given a name straight out of the Himalayas.

He told me that he was in training to become a lama.

"Lama?" I asked, being familiar only with the Dalai Lama.

"Lama means teacher. It's a common term among the Buddhists."

Shura and I developed great affection and respect for Karma. I had asked him a hundred questions and heard thoughtful, honest answers, including, "I don't know," and, "I really haven't a clue."

During a small party at the Farm on the Fourth of July (Shura's and my wedding anniversary), I sat with Karma at a table under the big market umbrella on the patio outside the dining room, and we talked about various practices and traditions of Buddhism. Most of the other guests had drifted out to the barbecue patio, on the other side of the house, and Karma and I

didn't have to expect too many interruptions.

Eventually, we got onto the subject of chakras — those energy centers in the body which have been studied for centuries by Buddhist spiritual teachers, among others — and it occurred to me that this was the one person who might, just possibly, understand what I was talking about, if I told him about my lucid dreams of the sexual kind.

I introduced the subject by saying, "I have something rather interesting I'd like to describe to you. It's an experience I've shared only with Shura because it's a very personal matter, but perhaps you could tell me — ah — have you ever heard anything like this before?"

After I'd described the nature of the dream experience, I asked him, "Is there a name for this kind of thing; is it known to the Buddhists?"

Karma looked at me and nodded, smiling slightly, "That center, right above the pubic bone, is called the Secret Place, in Buddhism."

*Well, that isn't exactly what you'd call a startlingly original name, but so be it.*

"The Secret Place? And am I correct in assuming that this sort of intense sexual experience is — ummm — not unknown, then?"

"Well," said Karma, "Let me tell you about when it happened to me."

*Omigod! This, I didn't expect!*

"It was around six months ago," Karma said, "And I was fully awake. I'd gone off into the hills to have an LSD experience, and I was alone. Everything was especially rich and magical, and I was just sitting there, taking in the beauty, when suddenly I felt an extraordinary thing happening just — as you said — above the pubic bone. Nothing in the genitals. But it was a tremendous, fierce sexual desire, and a push to — to completion. And when the orgasm happened, it was certainly one of the most intense I've ever had. It left me feeling totally surprised and very good. In body and soul."

"Do you know what it means?"

Karma sat back and sighed, "Just an intuition, but I don't really know. Do you have any ideas?"

"Well," I said, "My answer is an intuition, too, but what I feel is that it was a message from the deep, wise part of my soul, reminding me that I'm alive and that there are extraordinary forces inside me, and — and that life really *is* worth living, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. Something like that."

Karma nodded thoughtfully, "And that we're basically healthy and functioning, no matter how depressed or tired we might feel sometimes. Yes."

I leaned forward over the table, under its big green umbrella,

delighted at finally being able to share all this with somebody who had experienced it himself. I said, "I can't believe it! The first time I take a chance on telling somebody — I mean other than Shura — it turns out to be *exactly* the right person!"

Karma grinned, "By the way, this is the first time I've told anybody, too. After that day, I kept wondering whether it could happen the same way for a woman, and now I know. In fact, from your description, there's no difference at all!"

"Except that yours was fully awake! I've never had it happen except in dreams. Lucid dreams, but still dreams."

"The Secret Place," he repeated, "And I'm glad you got up the courage to ask me. We've both had some questions answered."

"Thank you, thank you," I laughed, "It's always good to have one's strange, solitary experience confirmed by someone else. Has it ever happened again, since that one time?"

"Never. I should make that 'Not yet' anyway," said Karma, "But I keep hoping. I keep hoping." He chuckled as I nodded my head vehemently.

"For Pete's sake, let me know if it happens to you again. I know that's a lot for me to ask, but I'm asking it anyway, because I have a lot of nerve, I guess, and I really want to know."

"If I'm graced with a repeat performance, I'll be happy to tell you. I don't mind at all."

So far, no news from Karma. And my own dreams of this kind are coming less frequently, now — perhaps about once every three or four months — but I'm grateful when I have one, and always wake from it with a sense of deep satisfaction and healthiness, and a feeling of what I can only describe as awe.

## CHAPTER 13. FLASHBACKS

(Shura's voice)

There was a conference held in San Francisco, in approximately mid-December, 1991, dedicated to the topic of LSD. It was hosted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, and invitations were extended not only to some of its staff, but to *a* number of officials of several police organizations around the world. There were invitees from The Netherlands, Great Britain and Australia, amongst other countries. The head count was around 200, and it was a two-day event. The nominal host was Mr. Robert C. Bonner, who was at that time the acting head of the DEA. And since many law enforcement administrators believed that the majority of the world's production of LSD actually took place in the San Francisco Bay Area, what better place could there be than San Francisco for a conference to discuss LSD problems?

Some time before the conference was to occur, I received word that I would probably be extended an invitation to present some of the history and background material as to the origin and early uses of the drug. An actual invitation arrived about a month ahead of the meeting, from somebody in Washington I did not personally know. However, my book *PIHKAL* had just appeared and I foresaw possible problems, not for myself necessarily, but for my acquaintance in the DEA who had suggested my name for the invitees' list in the first place. I got back in touch with him and mentioned that there might be a few people in the law enforcement world who would view *PIHKAL* not as the wealth of factual information that it was (thus being of value to them) but as a work promoting the use of psychedelic drugs (thus being an offense to them). In the latter case, there might be some question asked, like, "Who invited HIM here?" and this might put a bit of egg on my invitor's face. I sent him a copy of the book making clear that, as far as I was concerned, there had been no actual, official invitation yet extended.

Apparently some discrete inquiries were made, and I received a call

from my original contact saying, gently and diplomatically, that I had been dis-invited. The original invitation had apparently never been sent to me.

"Was it PIHKAL?" I asked.

"Not really. No one seemed to care, or even know about that."

"Why the no-show at San Francisco, then?" I asked, in as casual and unpushy a way as possible.

"Most divisions felt fine about it, in fact there was a general feeling that you could make a good contribution to the meeting. But one division was somewhat uncomfortable."

"Uncomfortable?"

"Well," he continued, "They were afraid that you might engage Bonner in a public debate that could prove embarrassing."

Indeed! I tried to visualize myself, a gray-haired old codger of an academic stripe, walking up to one of the most powerful law-enforcement men in the country, second only to the head of the FBI or the Attorney General, and initiating a verbal battle that would be embarrassing. To whom?, I asked myself. Somewhere, I thought, somebody has a very misguided opinion of someone! Was it the chief honcho who might be embarrassed by a debate with me? That doesn't speak well of their view of him. Were they afraid that I would be embarrassed? Why should anyone care how I felt? I could even see that there might be joy in certain quarters if I were to be tripped up and stumble into some public idiocy. Were they concerned that the Administration would be embarrassed? What was so fragile about their structure if one person could bring about such an imagined disgrace? And certainly it revealed the strange light in which some people view me, that they thought I would even consider such a stupid confrontation.

I did not participate, of course, but I did hear quite a bit, both officially and unofficially, about what went on. It turned out that the Angels had smiled upon me by keeping me home. It would have been more than just embarrassment. Had I been there, I would either have spoken up, and undoubtedly been most disruptive, or I would have kept quiet, and been completely ashamed of myself.

It seems that a holy war, a Jihad, was declared that day on LSD. It was portrayed as a thing of absolute evil which had to be eliminated at any cost. The Catholic Church had defined the witch as an enemy and death on the wheel was too kind a fate. The Muslim tribunal had decided that the heathen Christian devil was the embodiment of evil and was to be disemboweled. The law-enforcement powers that day had declared LSD to be an agent with unbelievably destructive potential which had to be eradicated.

I can't relate the actual texts that were delivered but let me try to give the flavor of this rampage. Much of the vitriol was directed at the

people associated with the drug. There are the criminals who make it. According to the authorities, they are concentrated here in the San Francisco Bay Area, which is truly the head of this monster whose tendrils extend around the world. There are the "sociopathic therapists" who sneak out into the woods every week, to access their hidden supplies of the ergotamine tartrate precursor. There, they cook up what they need for distribution amongst other therapists, for the use of their patients, and for supplying others such as school kids. These misguided therapists continue to espouse the myth that LSD has some value in medical practice. This is, of course, a rationalization of their own shameful addiction to the drug.

But some of the anger was directed to the drug itself. One of the most outrageous properties given it was the capability of hiding away for years and years inside the human body, only to reappear after much time had passed and produce a flashback. The mechanisms that were offered to explain this event were so bizarre as to be humorous, had they only been offered in the spirit of comedy. Unfortunately they were presented and accepted in total seriousness. It was stated to the attendees that even a single exposure to LSD can squirrel away a few lingering molecules in the frontal lobes of the brain where they might well stay hidden for as long as twenty years. Then they can suddenly reappear, provoking what has been called, clinically, an LSD flashback, which can cause the victim to become psychotic. Obvious examples were evident right here in San Francisco, said these flashback advocates. In the late 1960's there was the Summer of Love, with the prodigious use of psychedelic drugs, especially LSD. And look at the streets of the city today! The homeless, the psychotic, the disenfranchised! The implied explanation was that they had taken LSD, and finally the tucked-away molecules had descended from the frontal lobes, bringing about this modern-day tragedy.

The truth is that once LSD is put into the body, it produces its effects, then it and its metabolites are washed out quickly. The half-life in the blood is less than three hours, which says that however much might be there initially, there will be only half that amount three hours later. Even if the metabolic machinery of the body ignored it, the dose would be over 99% excreted in a day. With a monster dose going in on Monday, there would be only one percent of it there on Tuesday, and there is no analytical tool known that could detect it on Wednesday. If any molecule of a drug, or if even a trillion molecules of a drug, can precipitate a psychotic state, then that drug is of unprecedented potency. This is simply fantasy. It has never been observed. It exists only in the dedicated minds of law enforcement and in the publications of those who make their living on the drug scare.

But, says the uneducated skeptic, maybe the LSD levels are dropping, not because they are being excreted into the urine and removed from

the body, but because they are being absorbed and stored in the fatty tissue, and perhaps this fat depository is in the brain. Maybe it is in the frontal lobes! There is an earlier track record of the alleged brain fat and brain storage status, offered by a Presidential appointee, of another illegal drug. John Lawn, the head of the DEA under the Reagan administration, gave an address at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco in February, 1986. In the question and answer session that followed, he received a written query from the floor.

"What's wrong with legalizing marijuana?" he was asked.

He replied without hesitation, "I think that if we decide upon legalization, we can forget democracy as we now know it. In experimental animals, mutations in the brain caused by marijuana are found not only in the user or the user's offspring, but in the offspring's offspring. The dangers associated with cannabis are different than those associated with alcohol. Marijuana is fat-soluble and one third of the brain is fat." According to this theory, the flashback (or here more likely a mutation) is seen not just twenty years later, but two generations later! Molecules are magically being shipped from father to son to grandson by some DNA process rather than by simple frontal lobe storage.

None of this information has ever been even remotely documented.

Flashbacks are real. Everyone has experienced them. They have no unique relationship to LSD. They have nothing to do with psychosis.

I had one recently, at the Spring concert weekend, at the redwood retreat of the Owl Club. The last selection that we were playing was a medley of the music of Duke Ellington. This was put together by a dear musician friend of mine from Los Angeles, and was entitled something like, "To Duke, With Love." While sawing away on my viola, I was suddenly reminded of a concert I had attended, in the winter of 1941 or 1942, in downtown Boston. It was a concert of Duke Ellington's music put on by The Duke himself and his band, and it was, at least for me, very impressive. I can't remember if it was the concert itself, or maybe it was the first number on the program, that was entitled, "Black, Brown and Beige." It had been snowing lightly during my long walk from Wigglesworth Hall (up in Cambridge, at Harvard, where there was at that time no obvious black, or brown, or beige) down to the Symphony Hall, and I had not thought to brush the collected snow out of my hair. As I sat in the crowded audience and the show got underway, the snow began to melt, and there was water trickling down my neck. I remember my intense embarrassment due to the fact that I did not dare shake my head (I would get all the surrounding people wet) and I could in no way stop the melting process. I was stuck, and destined to suffer the concert with a wet shirt.

And now here, over fifty years later, a remarkable event had

occurred at my Owl Club retreat which was, for me, a flashback. As I swung into those themes from Duke Ellington's music, I felt water again trickling down my neck. Felt it with such authenticity that I actually had to put my hand up to my neck to check it out. Here I was, sitting in my present day world, in the direct sunshine, feeling my neck to see if it was wet! There was no LSD involved. If one wished to invoke past LSD use in any way as a contributing factor, then why not invoke any of the many other exposures I have had to remarkable phenomena? Maybe the climbing to the top of Mount Lassen, or piloting a Cessna 172 to Redding and refueling it there. Both of these occurred, and both were dramatic. It was the drama of the original event, and the trigger that allowed it to be relived, that provided the context of the flashback. Drugs need not be involved at all.

A few days later I was telling this story to a friend, and he gave me another example. His neighbor had been making his daily walk home from the train station following work, on the day of the Loma Prieta earthquake. He was about five minutes from his home when the earthquake struck. The ground ahead of him seemed to undulate up and down, and he became panicked as he thought he was experiencing a heart attack. It was only when he noticed that the telephone wires overhead were swaying back and forth that he realized the trauma was outside him, not within him. Nonetheless, the very next day, walking at the same time and at that very spot, he was hit with dizziness and light-headedness.

A flashback is triggered by some connection to a memorable event. And here was one certainly not involving LSD or any other "dangerous drug," as the man apparently was, and still is, a drug virgin.

Memorable? It is not really necessary that the remembered situation thought to be responsible for the flashback be documentably dramatic. Re-read Proust's *Swann's Way*. Nothing more was needed for his flashback than a bite of a madeleine that had been dipped in lime-blossom tea. Just a taste of this and he was catapulted back into an earlier time. A familiar smell, word, or sound, can catalyze a cascade of memories, which can be sufficiently intense to, in effect, allow some past event to be relived. And, without question, an intense LSD experience might focus your attention sharply on some sensory input. At some later time, a re-experiencing of that input might bring back the memory of the LSD event.

The event involved might be objectively trivial but, to you, important. Blame the brain and the marvelous workings of the mind for the phenomenon, but certainly don't blame the LSD. And, by all means, don't waste time looking for some lost molecule in the frontal lobes of the brain. It just ain't there.



## CHAPTER 14. THE INTENSIVE

(Alice's voice)

Audrey Fenn Redman came into my life — and I into hers — in a way that one would have to describe as decidedly unusual. It was a spring day in the 1980's, and Shura answered the phone in his office. I was in the living room, sorting photographs for an album, when I heard the *buzzer* on my desk giving the code for, "Pick up the phone quietly, and listen in."

When I had the receiver to my ear, a woman's voice was saying, "Glad you remember that lunch, because it'll save a lot of time. I don't expect you to remember what we talked about, the three of us, but we had a lot of fun — "

Shura interrupted with a laugh, "We certainly did! We left poor Peter floundering, I'm afraid — all that bouncing around of crazy ideas. I don't know what got into us! How is Peter, by the way?"

The woman said, hurriedly, "He's fine, as far as I know, Shura. I haven't seen him in years, and we don't talk on the phone much, these days, but he's a full professor now, and seems to be pretty happy."

Shura must have heard the increasing stress in her voice, because he got to the point, "Well, Audrey, you began by saying that you've got an unusual problem, and I'm — "

Audrey interrupted him, "You're probably the only person I know who might make some sense of this. I realize that sounds strange, after years of hearing nothing from me, but I sent out a very strong request — I guess you could call it a prayer — for the universe to send somebody who could help me, and your face popped up on the mental screen. I mean, I certainly didn't expect that — especially considering that we only met once and don't really know each other — but that's what happened."

Shura grunted encouragement.

"So, here I am," the voice continued. "And it's such a weird story, I don't quite know how to — well, I'll just give you a bit of background, so you'll have some idea of where this all started."

"Go ahead," said Shura, and I could hear the creak of his leather office chair, which meant he was settling back in it. "I'm listening."

"I have a patient," began Audrey, then hastily interrupted herself. "Oh, I should remind you that I'm a psychologist and certified hypnotherapist, here in Marin County — I'm sure you know the town of Mill Creek?"

"Sure," said Shura.

"I also teach hypnotherapy; I have private patients and I conduct seminars; I've written a book and I'm doing very, very well."

"Great," said Shura cheerfully.

"I'm very good at what I do, okay?"

*Funny; why is she trying so hard to convince him?*

There was a fractional pause, then Shura said, "Okay."

Audrey went on, "I have one patient who has a problem of the type I don't usually deal with, and I suppose the reason I took her on was that it was a tremendous challenge, and I felt I had a lot to learn from trying to help her. It's a case of so-called demonic possession. It's nothing like the Exorcist, in case you ever read it or saw the movie — "

"Nope, never did," said Shura.

"Just as well. This lady is in her 20's, Catholic — and I've got to tell you that the majority of possession cases are female and Catholic, or were at least raised Catholic during their formative years."

Shura mumbled, "Uh-huh."

"Anyway," continued Audrey, "The only time the demonic stuff happens is during holy days — Christmas, Easter — and that's not unusual in these cases, either. All this has been going on for years, ever since she was a teenager. She's married to a very nice man who's genuinely worried about her. He's supportive and very patient, thank God; he just wants this whole business resolved."

"Yes, of course," said Shura.

"All right. Anyway. Now we get to the big day. It was just a few weeks ago. Easter. I got a call at home — I live in a big house that sometimes doubles as my office — and there was my client, Cherry, crying for help, obviously out of control, then her husband got on the line and asked if he could bring her to me, so I could see for myself what one of these — these attacks — was like. I'd never seen her in the middle of one with my own eyes. I told him to bring her over, if he thought it was safe to have her in the car in this state while he drove.

"As soon as he'd hung up, I phoned an old friend of mine who's a Jesuit priest, and told him that I was about to open my home to an apparent case of demonic possession, and I thought he might want to practice the rites of exorcism. I said it certainly couldn't hurt, and might help, because the

victim was a Catholic. He said he'd never done one before, but of course he was intrigued and would gather up whatever he thought was necessary and hurry over."

"Oh, my!" said Shura, obviously getting involved, as was I.

Audrey paused, and I heard the sound of quick swallowing.

*Her throat is dry. Wonder if it's water or alcohol in the glass.*

"My friend the priest lives nearby, so he got to my house before the others; they live in the East Bay. He showed me his little bottle of holy water, and told me he would use the waiting time to bone up on the exorcism ritual. He was trying to be dignified and very serious, but I could tell he was excited at the prospect of actually seeing a case of possession — or presumed possession — live and in color, for the first time in his life, you know?"

"Yeah," said Shura, "I can imagine!"

"When Cherry arrived, her husband was with her. She was so pale, I wondered for a moment if she had any blood in her. I helped her onto one couch, and the husband and I sat on the other, and watched while my Jesuit friend got to work. He was very impressive, Shura. He'd done his homework, and he really rose to the occasion. A lot of intensity and passion and wonderful Latin phrases. And holy water, of course."

"Uh-huh," muttered Shura, "And — ?"

"It seemed to work. She stopped shaking, and the crying began to taper off. She was breathing more evenly, and there was more color in her face. All this took about an hour. And just as I was starting to relax, I caught sight of something out of the corner of my eye. It was a — an impression of a dark — a dark thing — a streak of black — moving very fast between Cherry's couch and the door to the dining room. An impression, you understand, too quick for me to turn and focus. Then my big dog, Hera, who is never, *never* spooked by anything, Shura — she's a true Buddha-dog — growled and got up from the carpet where she'd been lying all evening, and took off. I mean, she was going so fast, her nails slipped on the wooden floor, scrabbling desperately for purchase, then she was gone. She was terrified, Shura; she just wanted out of there. I've never seen her act that way, not in six years. Not even when we had a small earthquake; I've never seen her frightened of *anything*!"

I heard another pause and a couple of swallowing sounds, then Audrey continued.

"In just a few minutes, everybody was fine; Cherry was back on her feet and full of smiles, thanking the priest; her husband hugged me; the only person there who wasn't completely satisfied with the whole thing was me. Or I. Whatever. But I got them all out the door, then I spent a lot of time calling for Hera, but she wouldn't come. She stayed out all night. That's the first time, Shura; she's never done that before."

Holding fingers over the mouthpiece of my phone, I reached for my coffee cup, sipped, then lit another cigarette.

"Okay," said Audrey, speaking slowly, "Now we get to the really difficult part, the truly weird part, Shura."

"I'm listening," he said.

*So am I, so am I.*

"Since that evening, I've been in a state — something happened to me that night. For one thing, I sense something here with me, in my house, and it's not benign. I don't feel it all the time, thank God, but when I get home from the office, my poor dog is a nervous wreck, and there's something — I think it's left over from the exorcism, Shura — and I don't know what I'm supposed to do with it. "

"Uh-huh," said Shura, almost absently. I knew he was thinking hard, as was I.

"But that's not the worst part. I haven't felt really normal since Easter. I feel as if I've taken some kind of strange psychedelic; I took a lot of them when I was in college, you know, and this is a state very much like being on a low dose of a drug. I know I'm supposed to learn something, or change something, or experience something, but I don't know what it is. I have questions like: am I supposed to resist this dark presence that seems to have attached itself to me; should I call back my friend the priest and have him exorcise a nice Jewish girl who seems to have adopted a Catholic demon? Or am I supposed to seek it out and learn its nature and discover what it wants to teach me? You see my dilemma?"

"I certainly can," said Shura, "And the fact that you seem to be in an altered state would imply, to me, that some sort of process is trying to work itself out. Have you talked to any of your peers? Other professionals who might — "

"I can't go to anyone I know, Shura. I don't have to tell you what they'd say. Psychotic episode. Treat with the usual tranquilizers. They aren't equipped to deal with this area, you know, the spiritual, the psychic. At least, none of the people I know would have the slightest idea how to go about handling this kind of thing. That's why I thought maybe you — "

"Well," interrupted Shura, and I could hear the chair creak as he sat forward, "How about coming up here and meeting my wife, Alice, and we can talk about it and see what we come up with."

There was a small pause, and when she spoke again I could tell from the tone of Audrey's voice that the introduction of an unknown stranger into the mix wasn't what she had expected, but she agreed to clear her calendar for Wednesday of the following week, when Shura would be home. After he had given her detailed directions to our place, the conversation ended with her intense whisper, "Thank you, Shura. Whether you

can help me or not, thanks for listening to me. It feels good to have told somebody. It really does."

"See you next week, my friend. Let's see what we can do."

Shura hurried into the living room, grinning. "Well, how do you like *them* potatoes?"

"Pretty interesting. Pretty damned interesting," I smiled back, "And maybe you can fill me in on your lunch with her all those years ago; what was your impression?"

"Oh, yeah," Shura said, "There was an old student of mine, Peter Somebody-or-other — his name'll come back to me — and he phoned and said he wanted to collar me for lunch, and he'd have his girlfriend with him. So I went out to lunch with them in some place off-campus, and she turned out to be one of those super-smart, cocky young things who loves word-play and puns and all that kind of stuff. We had a ball — at Peter's expense, I'm afraid — just showing off to each other, you know, having fun with our own brilliance."

"What do you mean, 'at Peter's expense'?"

"Oh, I don't mean we ganged up on him; nothing like that. It's just that, after a while, I think he felt somewhat left out. He pretty much was. We just kind of ignored him. Not very nice, but we got caught up in our own little act, and it was hard to stop because we were both flying high. I felt a little bit ashamed afterwards, thinking about poor ole Peter with his big smile getting smaller, you know, as Audrey and I juggled our pretty balls in the air."

I chuckled at the mental picture, then asked for more details about Audrey.

Shura eased himself into the big comfy armchair next to the bookcase.

"I don't remember her that well, really," he said, after a moment's search through the memory bank, "But I have the impression of a very, very sharp mind, somewhat aggressive, not my type, I'm afraid, but a good sense of humor and a sparkle in the face. That's about it. Never heard from her again, until today. As a matter of fact, I don't think I heard from Peter again, either. I'm afraid I forgot about both of them."

"Tall, short, fat, blonde, dark hair—?"

"Uh — tall and skinny — yes, tall and thin and dark hair."

"Okay. I'll see for myself on Wednesday, I guess."

Audrey Redman arrived soon after noon, and I saw for myself. Taller than I, probably five feet six or seven, I thought, as I shook her hand. Somewhere in her late thirties. A heart-shaped face which, while it wasn't pretty, had an attractive aliveness, with deeply intelligent hazel eyes, under a curly cap of reddish-brown hair. When she smiled, it was only with the

mouth, not the eyes.

*She's holding herself under strict control, this lady. Must be a lot of fear inside.*

After I'd done my hostess thing, serving iced tea and a plate of cookies, I sat down with both of them at the dining room table and we began to talk. Shura told Audrey that he had filled me in on the basic story, and I began asking questions.

Audrey's initial hesitation in talking about this private and difficult matter with a woman she'd only just met seemed to disappear as she heard in my voice no skepticism, no rejection of anything she was saying, only strong interest and acceptance, which was what I intended her to hear. The tension around her eyes smoothed out gradually, as we talked.

"I've never had anything like this happen before, I've got to tell you," she said with a short laugh, one hand making a gesture of emphasis, "And nothing I've experienced, in years of working with people's darker sides, prepared me for that — whatever that thing was which left Cherry and raced across the room. And which I think is still in my home. I wasn't ready for that. I'm not a Catholic, and I don't believe in the devil. But I do believe in the existence of evil, at least in the world of human beings. And something evil was made — well — almost physical, manifest somehow, in that room. And I'm still feeling a shadow of it — a piece of it — in my house."

All attempts at smiling, or sounding lighthearted, had been abandoned by now. Audrey's shoulders were slumped, and her hands gripped each other on the table; I wondered briefly if she was afraid they would shake if she let them loose.

She glanced up at each of us in turn, "What am I supposed to do with all of it? That's the major question. What do I do to get rid of this *entity* — or the residue that I keep sensing in my place, and that's still spooking my beautiful dog? Whatever it is — wherever it's from — what am I supposed to learn?"

"You teach hypnotherapy, Audrey," I said, "Have you tried getting into trance, to see what comes up?"

"Of course I have," she answered, with a touch of impatience, "And the results have been disturbing, to say the least. I think I told you, I'm going around in a state that feels pretty much off baseline, as Shura would say. As soon as I go into trance, all hell breaks loose. The mental screen fills up with images and they're all dark. I can't get any light in at all. I feel as if I'm under attack, as if something's sitting on my chest, weighing me down, pushing on me, demanding something, and I just have to get out."

I waited, feeling that there was more to come, not wanting to distract her.

"I have to admit I'm afraid," said Audrey, "The trance state makes

me feel too vulnerable, so I've given up trying to get answers that way."

All three of us were silent for a moment.

At this time in my life I had begun, very slowly, during the previous year or so, learning how to guide people through an experience of MDMA, in order to gain insight into their problems. I saw very few people, perhaps one a week, and was gradually gaining a certain amount of confidence in myself as a therapist. I seemed to have an instinct for how to go about it.

I had gone through the inevitable mistakes and learned from them. I had even reached the point at which you understand that mistakes are going to happen, and the only thing that matters is being aware of them and admitting errors openly to yourself and the client, without defensiveness. So far, I had done no harm, and occasionally seemed to have helped a great deal. Every time I began work with a new client, I faced as calmly and honestly as I could my own lack of experience and inadequacy of knowledge; I was learning quite a lot of humility.

Shura and I had already discussed the possibility of my working with Audrey, using MDMA, if it seemed appropriate when I had a chance to talk to her. But now I was facing this sharp-edged, obviously intelligent woman, whose attitude and somewhat staccato way of talking managed to make it clear that she wasn't the type to suffer fools gladly. I felt a hollow in my stomach.

*This is the kind of female I stay away from. Judgmental, impatient, demanding; I could never work with someone like this; I'm simply not that sure of myself or what I know.*

Nonetheless, I heard myself saying, "Have you ever heard of a drug called MDMA, Audrey?"

"Yes, I've heard some mentions of it, but that's all. Why?"

"Well," I replied, "It's a quite extraordinary drug, not a psychedelic, but something else. It's a superb tool for psychotherapy. I have a paper I'll give you which describes its effects. I wrote this and a corresponding one on another drug called 2C-B, a few years ago, signed by the well-known Anonymous, and I think it might be of help to you."

"In what way?"

"Oh, yes, of course. I'm sorry, I didn't explain what I had in mind," I apologized, already feeling like the idiot I would undoubtedly prove myself to be if I tried working with this person.

*This is an animus woman, and I stay away from animus women; I certainly don't volunteer to do therapy with them. Especially considering the fact that she's a highly trained therapist, and I'm a highly untrained one.*

"What I had in mind was possibly trying a session with MDMA, with you, to see if you can get some new perspective on what's happening to you. It might help trigger some kind of breakthrough. If it doesn't work,

then you certainly won't be the worse for it, anyway. What do you think? Want to give it a try?"

"Jesus," muttered Audrey, dropping her head into her hands. After a moment, she looked up and turned to Shura. "What do you think about this? Should I do it?"

"It's a good drug, Audrey. It works for an awful lot of people. And, as Alice says, it can't hurt you. At worst, you won't get any insights, and you may feel a bit tired the next day, but — after all — what can you lose? You seem to be up against a brick wall; at least, that's what it sounds like to me. Why don't you give it a try? Alice is pretty good at doing this kind of thing, or so they tell me."

"Who tells you?" I grinned at him.

"Oh — people. You know, the occasional grateful survivor!"

"Right!"

We both laughed and turned back to our guest, who was trying to smile and not quite managing it.

*Why am I doing this? I don't know if I like this lady, and I can't work with someone I don't like. On the other hand, she's really in a bind, and the whole demon thing is intriguing. It can't hurt to do one session and see what happens.*

Suddenly, Audrey's face brightened. She said, "I've brought a tape with me; it shows how I work. I tape some of my hypnotherapy sessions, to use in seminars, and I thought you might want to know that side of me."

"Sure, I'd love to see it," I nodded, feeling less than maximum enthusiasm.

*What if the tape confirms the aspects of her which already make me uneasy? I can't go back on my offer. It'll just make me that much more uncomfortable about the whole prospect. Oh, what the hell; may as well watch it and see what I can learn.*

"Let's take it into the living room," I said, rising, "That's where the TV is."

She followed me and watched while I took the tape from her and put it into the VCR.

"Make yourself comfortable on the couch, Audrey," I said, picking up the remote control and sitting myself down on a large floor pillow, facing the television.

During the next hour, I watched mesmerized as a completely different Audrey, a woman with the warmth of a loving mother, the intuition and instincts of a truly inspired therapist, and seemingly infinite patience, worked with a young man suffering from cancer, in a sunlit room in Arizona. Tears were drying on my cheeks when the tape ended.

"Hoo Boy!" I said, and blew my nose on a Kleenex.

"I just wanted you to see that side of me," said Audrey, quietly, her face showing relief and even pleasure at my response, "And how I work."

*This Audrey — the one on the tape — THIS Audrey I could work with!*



We made an appointment for an exploratory session using MDMA, in two weeks.

For the first time, as I always do with first times, I gave Audrey only 100 milligrams of the drug, because — although that amount *is* considered rather low — I've seen it result in a full-blown plus-three in a sensitive person. I told her, "Even if it turns out to be less effective than you might like, it'll give you a chance to know the material, get comfortable with it, and we can up the dosage level a bit next time."

I also reminded her that, at about the hour and a half point, she could have a supplement of 40 milligrams, which wouldn't increase the effect at all, but would simply stretch it out longer before it began declining. "If you really want the supplement — if things are going well for you, and you want it to continue at full effect for another hour — you can take it. But there's no obligation to do so, okay? The only negatives will be a slight increase in the jaw clench and nystagmus, but most people aren't that bothered by them."

I told her that she could do anything she felt like during the transition — sit, lie down, walk around — whatever was comfortable for her, and that she could talk or not, as she wished. I listened to my own voice, and noted that it had already softened, slowed and dropped slightly in pitch, as it tended to do during sessions.

Audrey chose to lie down on the couch during the transition, and spoke only to comment on the effects of the drug, as she became aware of them, "Yes, I see what you mean when you said it's like no other sensation you've ever had. It's coming in waves, very gentle. I think I like it."

I stayed silent, watching her. It took time for her hands to relax, but finally they lay at her sides as she breathed slowly, eyes closed.

*Wonder if she's letting herself go into trance?*

She was. It was my first experience with someone who was familiar with hypnotic trance, and the first clue that one could employ it successfully with MDMA.

We had begun.

Audrey came up to the Farm one day each week, and we would work together for around six hours, using MDMA at the level of 120 milligrams and adding a supplement of 40 milligrams, which she always chose to take at the appropriate time. She employed the trance state, which no longer threatened her. From the first session, the images had been clear and powerful, without any suggestion of the confusion and murky dangerousness she had run into before. It was as if, once she had made the decision to uncover and understand her own buried darkness, her psyche opened and sent images of teachers, human and animal, to help the process.

If there was a crucial breakthrough in progress when the sixth hour ended, we would keep going until it was resolved. We called the sessions

"intensives." I had been doing such sessions with other people, and had learned a great deal about many aspects of the human unconscious (including my own), but this was the first time I had worked in such depth with repressed dark side material — what Carl Jung called the Shadow — and it was both exhausting and tremendously exciting.

We dealt with the images and emotions that arose, most of them having to do with her childhood, growing up with an emotionally cold mother and a manipulative, judgemental father, trying to salvage what she could of self-validation, while her unconscious self-image grew darker and more twisted.

Over the weeks, she reported the gradual diffusion of the hostile strangeness which had haunted her house for the past many weeks.

"Hera's acting her old self, again," she told me cheerfully, one day, "I think the nasty from Easter has gone."

"Have any idea why it left?"

"Well," Audrey grinned, "It's beginning to look to me like it was a form of my own dark side, my own Beast. It was clamoring for my attention, needing to get resolved, and it took the exorcism as an opportunity to emerge. Now that I'm working it through, giving it that attention, there's no need for it to hang around. What do you think?"

"I suspect you're right on the money. And it must mean you're doing what your psyche wanted you to do with it."

"Yes," she said, "Oh, yes. Funny, how I've done dark side work with patients for years and years, and never stopped to realize I hadn't done my own!"

Early in our work, I had told her about my experience of my own dark side, what I called "The Maggot At The Bottom Of The Well," and the resolution — or the beginning of it, anyway — when I had visualized myself opening a door in my stomach and tucking inside it for warmth and nurturing the pathetic, cringing, self-hating, dirty little maggot-become-baby which was my unconscious self-image. Becoming mother to my rejected child-self.

I also gave her the image of the volcano, a mountain full of red-hot lava, which she could find just above her navel, where anger, old and new, could be located, and from whose top the lava of fury and outrage could be dribbled, safely, at a rate of her own choosing.

"When you practice letting that lava begin to flow, just a bit," I said, "And find out you can stop it whenever you want to, your unconscious begins to let go of the fear of having the whole world blow up, of getting lost in the firestorm, if any of that outrage is let loose."

Audrey nodded, "I can see how years and years of anger and frustration must have built up, to the point where my psyche felt it couldn't risk ventilating any of it, because there was just so much. As you said,

there must have been a deep-seated fear that if it blew, it would take all of me with it!"

When, after months of work, Audrey finally faced her monster, it was a furry, black, spider-like entity which didn't expect to be seen, and had never before been looked at with the conscious mind. It kept trying to slide out of sight, until finally she trapped it and moved toward it. Then, deep in the trance state, she managed the most terrifying step of all — moving into the monster, looking out through its eyes — and discovered its exhilarating strength, its lack of fear, its determination to keep the entire structure, the entire identity that was Audrey, safe from harm, either physical or emotional.

"So the monster is also the Survivor, the part of you concerned only with keeping you alive and well," I said. "Once you get inside its skin, you can see that it can actually be your ally."

"My God," replied Audrey, opening her eyes, "What an amazing experience! I actually liked being inside it; there was no fear at all, just power — tremendous power!"

"How do you feel about it, now? Do you still hate it?"

"Yes. No. Not hate, anymore; dislike. It's a part of me that I can't help rejecting. It's still a monster, Alice. How can I like something like that — accept it — even if it serves a protective purpose?"

"It looks the way it does because it represents everything you were afraid you were, when you were a kid; your parents never validated you, honey. So, gradually, you developed an unconscious self-image of something unlovable, nasty, completely unacceptable. The little girl became a monster, because only a monster would have such a hard time getting anyone to show love and acceptance. Of course, once it settled in as resident beast, it had nothing to fear but being uncovered, so it became very, very strong. I mean, if you have to be a beast, yes?, may as well be the bestest beast on the block!"

"I know," said Audrey, "I understand all that, intellectually. But it's still hard to approach it with anything but disgust."

"That's okay, my dear," I reassured her, "You've done tremendous work today, and you deserve to pat yourself on the back for being a damned courageous, strong lady. This was tough stuff, and you did it!"

During the following weeks, we took the next step, moving slowly against Audrey's emotional resistance, working on having her take the spider thing into her arms, to feel the beginnings of compassion for it, some stirrings of pity for the unloved little girl who had grown to believe that this monster was who she was.

Finally, one extraordinary day, we both watched the black, filthy horror gradually transform into a huddled, grief-stricken child, and I moved over to the couch with Audrey and held her as she sobbed in my

arms. I became the Good Mother she'd never had, rocking the long adult body which had been taken over by an agonized four-year-old. I cried with her.

Uncounted time later, I returned to my chair, leaving Audrey sitting up on the couch, beginning to smile, tears drying on her cheeks.

"Well, sweetheart," I said, grinning broadly, "It's done. You've done it. We're finished."

"Yes, I know we are," she said, smiling fully now. She stood up and held out her arms, and I went over to her and we held each other tightly.

Two weeks later, I had a phone call from Audrey. In reply to my question, she said, "I'm doing very well, in fact I'm doing beautifully. And I want to ask you something. Don't answer right away; give it some thought, okay?"

"Sure. What is it?"

"I want you to work with me. Be co-therapist with me, just for certain very special patients I've already gone a long way with; they're people I know can go further, if I can introduce them to MDMA. They've done their basic work, but they're capable of a lot of spiritual growth, and what you and I did together makes me believe it can be done with them."

"Well, m'dear," I said, "There's no reason you can't do it yourself, you know. I'll make sure you have the material; you know how to go about it."

"I want to work with you, Alice. I think we'd make a hell of a team. Just one or two patients a week, at the most. I'll pay you, you know. Not much, but something. You have a gift for it, and I think you'll find it tremendously exciting. Think about it, please. Take your time and consider everything. The one problem for you might be the distance you'll have to drive to get here. It's over an hour from your place, at the far end of the town. But please give it some real thought, okay? Phone me when you've made a decision."

I called her two days later, having talked it over with Shura. We had decided, as I told Audrey, that if for any reason I felt it was too much, or not working out for me, I would simply stop. But I knew there was *a* lot for me to learn, and this was the way to do it. "I'll give it a try, honey. Thank you for asking me. It's going to be very interesting, to say the least."

Thus began my two years of work as a co-therapist with one of the most gifted healers in this country, and the growth of one of the most extraordinary relationships I've ever had with another human being.

## DAN

Audrey lived in a sprawling, two-story Victorian house in the hills behind the town of Mill Creek. She met me at my car and pulled me by the

hand through a short wooden gate to show me the large, carefully tended garden in back of the house.

Inside, there was a big kitchen, a dining room with an oval, highly polished table, and the living room where we would do our work. I saw two long, grey tweed couches at right angles to each other, facing a big, red brick fireplace. There were high windows on three sides of the room, and the light coming through them shone softly on the chestnut-satin surface of a long coffee-table. A grey-blue rug covered some of the parquet floor.

"How do you like it?" She was beaming at me, her face full of a child's transparent pride.

"Absolutely beautiful. It's a dream-house," I grinned back at her.

"Sit down, sit down. I'm usually on this couch, and I put my client on the other one."

"I thought you saw your patients — clients — in an office?"

"Most of them, yes. But there's an occasional one I'll do a long session with, you know — somebody who's ready for a breakthrough and needs to have more than the usual hour or two. That sort of thing. I usually have them come here."

I nodded.

Audrey put a hand on my arm, "Would you like some coffee?"

"Sure," I said, "Coffee would be great right now. Mornings are my worst time; I'm a night person, and my creative juices don't start flowing until after four in the afternoon, so a bit of caffeine is a help at whatever the hell hour this is in the morning."

"It's already nine, you ninny! Most of the world is hard at work, earning a living!"

I laughed, "Yeah, I suppose so. I used to be part of the rat-race, as a matter of fact, for more years than I care to remember."

I followed her into the kitchen and looked around while she set to work with an espresso machine sitting on the tile counter. On the refrigerator I saw several cartoons from various magazines, held in place by a variety of magnets, and laughed as I read them.

"You have my taste in humor, you'll be happy to hear!"

"Of course," she said, smiling, "How could it be otherwise?"

We took our coffee cups into the living room and curled up at opposite ends of her favorite couch, both of us dressed comfortably in blue jeans.

"Okay," said Audrey, "The reason I asked you to come an hour ahead of the patient is so that I could give you some background on him, and also, I thought we could talk about how best to go about doing this new — this kind of therapy."

"The intensive. I don't know what else to call it, do you?"

"The intensive seems the best term to use. The only other name that

comes to mind is The Long, Long Session, or maybe The Never-ending Session!"

I chuckled, "Yeah, let's go with the dignified one."

"Okay, now, is there anything I don't already know from working with you?"

I sat forward, "Well, there are several things I'd like to go through with you, things I feel are really important, all right?"

"Go ahead," she said, picking up her coffee.

"Most details, we'll figure out as we go along," I began, "But there are a few absolute rules which have to be followed consistently, no exceptions. We can't be careless about them. By the way, I'll bring you the MDMA, enough for quite a few sessions, and you must put it in a safe place, somewhere very private.

"The first rule is that you must get the drug out ahead of time, before the client comes. Nobody should *ever* see where you keep it. MDMA's not illegal — and if the gods are on our side, it never will be — but that doesn't matter. We might want to use something someday that is illegal — one of the great classic psychedelics like LSD or mescaline or whatever — for people who are ready for it, and just in case we decide to do that, down the road, we need to have a system in place that'll protect you."

"Sure, okay," she smiled, "Secret panel behind toilet; deep hole between the dahlias. No problem."

"Doing psychotherapy with psychoactive drugs isn't exactly mainstream, after all, although a lot of therapists have been doing it for a long time. It's still something one has to be discrete about. More than discrete. It has to remain totally secret, at least for now. Someday, the political climate may change and we can all go public, but not yet."

"Yes, I know," Audrey nodded, "I can't afford to have any rumors going around that Doctor Redman is giving her clients mind-altering drugs, for God's sake!"

"No, you can't," I agreed, "And here comes rule number two."

I drank some coffee, then rummaged in my purse for a pack of cigarettes and lit one. There was a nice, big ceramic ashtray on the table, so I assumed it was all right to smoke.

"Okay," I said, "So when your patient gets here, have the MDMA already in a glass, and if it's the first time, tell him — or her — that it tastes awful by itself, and that most people like to mix it in fruit juice. Then you pour out his choice of juice into the glass and make whatever appropriate blessing you want, and tell him to drink it down.

"Now, the second rule is this: under no circumstances do you let him take his glass out of the room — which will probably be the kitchen — before he's emptied it; not to the bathroom, not out to the garden. He has

to drink it down as you watch. Then you take his glass and rinse it out under the tap."

There was a brief silence, then Audrey said, "No traces of evidence, huh?"

"Yup. It's an unpleasant bit of paranoia, but it's necessary. You'll find that most people will go along with the little ceremony and not ask questions, so that you won't ever have to tell them that they're not allowed to drink it out of your sight. This rule has to be followed, even with someone you've known for years and trust absolutely. No exceptions. It means that you always have deniability."

She nodded, "Deniability. Yes."

"This way, no one can prove that you supplied the drug; the patient could have taken the MDMA or whatever before coming to your house. Okay? Deniability."

I took a moment to draw on my cigarette and sip my coffee, which was getting cool.

"The third rule," I went on, "Is my own personal one. It's not a safety thing, it's the way I want to do things. If a patient is on the edge of an important breakthrough, or if he's already launched into one, it doesn't matter how many hours have gone by, we keep on going until he's out the other side. We never leave a patient stuck in the middle of something important, regardless of how tired we are, okay?"

"I've always followed that rule," replied Audrey, "Most of my trance sessions are ninety minutes, but if something erupts at the end of that time, we just keep going and I apologize to the next patient — if I've got one waiting — or phone and shift later people around."

I beamed at her, "Oh, good, good!"

"The intensives have to be basically open-ended, in other words."

"Yes, exactly," I nodded, "Most of the time, as you know, six hours will be enough; the patient tends to get tired, and you begin to hear repetition instead of new stuff."

"Yeah," Audrey smiled and leaned forward over her knees, "But if the door's ready to open, you can *feel* it; there's all that energy flying around loose; you can smell it coming, like ozone in the air before a storm!"

"Uh-huh," I laughed, "We both know that one!"

She sat back against the couch, "I have no difficulty with any of those rules, Alice, none at all. They all make sense."

"The rest you know from your own experience." I said, "Everyone has to be reminded to drink something, water or juice, throughout the session; no one leaves until he's completely baseline, and if there's any doubt at all, he has to stay the night."

"Yes. I've explained all that to Dan, the patient you'll see today. I

said he could take a taxi here and back home, instead of driving his own car, if he doesn't want to risk the chance of getting stuck overnight. And I told him he can't have a friend or relative pick him up, because that would mean involving another person in what's going on here, and that's a no-no."

I nodded, "I usually told the people I worked with that it was okay if they wanted to tell someone close to them about their experiences, *after* we were through working together, but they must never, never pin down exactly where or when it happened, and under no circumstances with whom."

"I've made all that absolutely clear to Dan. He understands."

"Good. Have you got Daniel's MDMA weighed out already, in the kitchen?"

"Yes, Mommy. Already done. One hundred twenty milligrams. And forty for a supplement if he wants one. He's a big, tall guy, so I thought one hundred might be a little light for him."

*He's her patient; I have to trust her instincts.*

I grinned approval. "Okay, then tell me about him; what should I know?"

"First, let me reiterate something I've already told you," said Audrey, putting her coffee cup down on the table, "Which is, that I will never bring up the subject of a psychoactive drug with a patient until I've worked with him, or her, for a minimum of six months — generally closer to a year — and I feel he's completed his basic work on whatever his problems are. By the end of that time, I can be pretty sure of whether or not we've got a good candidate, someone who can learn and keep growing."

I smiled, "Yes, it's a good rule. There may be exceptions, but I'll rely on you to really know your people very well before you make that decision. And, by the way, does Dan understand the precautions about talking on the phone?"

Audrey's face gave me the answer; she'd forgotten that part.

"Didn't mention that. I'll be sure to tell him today. Thanks for reminding me."

"No problem," I said, "Now, what do I need to know?"

Audrey started to answer, and caught herself. She looked intently at me and said, "You know, before I talk about Dan, I'd like to run this by you. I think it should be a part of the intensive."

"Yes, what's that?"

"A contract. It was taught me by one of my best teachers, years ago. Ruth drummed this into me, and I think it applies just as much to work with these drugs as it does to hypnotherapy alone."

"Who is this Ruth?" I asked.

"Someday, you've got to meet her. She lives far down on the



Peninsula, with some horses she loves like members of the family, and she's a tiny dynamo of a woman who knows more about hypnotherapy than anyone except the Founding Pillars, bless her. She's probably never even heard of MDMA or mescaline or any of those things, but she taught me the best of what I know about the use of trance."

I fastened my eyes on Audrey's face, listening intently.

"I always make a contract — a verbal contract — with my patients before beginning hypnotherapy," said Audrey. "And I insist that they repeat the words of the contract, the first time, thinking carefully about what they mean; I want to be sure that the unconscious mind hears all of it clearly. And they have to agree to each provision without reservations, or the therapy never gets going.

"The first rule," continued Audrey, "Is that, although any and all feelings of hostility can be freely expressed in the session, whether I am their object or not, the anger may not be physically acted out against me or my possessions. If the acting out of a traumatic event is needed, I will supply both the opportunity and the means. Otherwise, anger and hate will not cross the line into physical action."

"Let me ask a quick question," I interrupted, "What do you do for a patient who needs to act out something intense, like killing the bad parent, or the sexual abuser?"

Audrey nodded, "Yes. That often happens at a certain point in the therapy, and what I do is put a padded mat and a pillow on the floor and hand the client an old sheet — I have a stack of worn-out sheets and half-sheets in my closet, for exactly that purpose — and let him go to it, tearing the sheet, pounding the pillow, acting the whole thing out against the symbolic Bad Guys. I believe most hypnotherapists do something like that. It works."

"Great!" I said, nodding.

Audrey smiled and went on, "The second rule is exactly the same as number one, but applies to sexual feelings. No matter what the fantasy or urges or whatever, you can and should talk about it, but no physical acting out allowed.

"Finally, they must agree that, if an opportunity to go over the threshold into death presents itself in the trance state, and they're tempted, for any reason, they are not to do so. Or, to put it another way, 'You will not die on my time, in my house or office, because your death would cause me harm, and you will not cause me harm, as I will not cause you harm.'"

I nodded my head vehemently.

*Why didn't that occur to me? Ofcourse, people have been known to meet up with the door to the other side — it happened to me that day on peyote — and they've been tempted to go through it. I wasn't, but somebody else might be. I didn't*

*realize that could happen in trance, too.*

Audrey went on, "I know the way I said it sounds cold and uncaring, but you see, the client's reaction will be a sudden shock of understanding that we're talking about *real* life and death. His unconscious mind will register the fact that, no matter what might happen during the session, there are rules that have to be followed."

*And that death door is usually so friendly and welcoming. It doesn't entice you; it just says, "Here is the way back home, when it's time to return." For a deeply depressed patient, it can mean escape from pain and desolation. Without a contract, the temptation to go through could be overwhelming.*

"It's so obvious, when you put it into words," I said. "Of course, that's what should be done before any session with a psychoactive drug, as well as with trance work! I simply never thought of it in terms of an actual contract you could make with the patient, ahead of time. It's a great idea!"

Audrey waved a hand, "One of the advantages of having it spelled out that way, of course, is that the client unconsciously feels freer in expressing whatever heavy stuff comes up, because I've supplied a safe structure within which he can let loose. People with tremendous repressed rage are always unconsciously afraid of letting it out in some kind of explosion, because of the possibility — the probability, as the unconscious perceives it — of doing terrible damage to something or someone — "

"If that volcano erupts, it'll burn up the world," I said.

"— and having to hate and punish themselves for it forever after."

*She went through it, herself, when we worked together. She knows the fire mountain and the fear of letting the lava out.*

"Okay," I summarized, "We lay out the contract in detail before the first session. Since these people will all have worked with you for a long time, they'll already be familiar with it. We just say it again and emphasize that the rules of the contract apply to psychoactive drug therapy exactly as they do to hypnotherapy."

"Agreed," said Audrey, shifting her legs and raising one hand to check her watch, "Now, here's the background on Daniel. He's an engineer, and he works as a trouble-shooter for a large company with several branches across the country. He has to do a lot of flying. Just a few months ago, he told me he was having trouble with his legs, whenever he had to take a plane, and that this was a problem he'd never had before, and it had gotten so bad, he'd finally had to ask his doctor for a prescription analgesic. He asked me if I thought it might have anything to do with what we'd been working on in therapy."

"Hmmm. That's an interesting sort of question! Pretty insightful." I asked, "What *had* you been working on in therapy?"

"Well," replied Audrey, "His presenting complaint was a mild

chronic depression which had been going on for years, with a couple of recent panic attacks which had gotten his attention. That's what led him to go looking for a therapist, to try to get a handle on what was happening."

"And you've worked with him —"

"For about seven months." she supplied, "There wasn't anything spectacular in his background; mostly it's a picture of a large family, middle class, in Pennsylvania, who adopted the father's military mind-set; you know, emotion is weakness, a real man doesn't display his feelings, and any attention at all to the workings of your own mind or psyche is self-indulgent poppycock. The kind of people who'll consult a psychiatrist only when a family member has gone totally bonkers and is running plumb naked down Main Street, shrieking that the Martians are chasing him, okay?"

I nodded.

"For ordinary problems of life," continued Audrey, "A 'real' man is expected to solve them solo or, if that's not possible, to use will-power and self-control and just get through the bad patches, without embarrassing himself or others. Etcetera."

I made a sour face in recognition.

"We'd been doing pretty well," continued Audrey, "Or *so* I thought; actually, we *were* doing pretty well, working on his relationship with his father, in particular."

"His father was in the military?"

"No, no!" She waved her hands, "I didn't mean he was — I said a military *mind-set*. He was actually the principal of an elementary school."

I smiled, "Okay, I understand."

"Then, eight weeks ago, Daniel came up with this leg problem. I've got some notes here, from the tapes of that session."

She leaned over and picked up an olive colored folder from the floor, opened it and removed a sheet of paper. She read to me, "It's my legs; as soon as the plane is airborne, they start hurting. A few months ago, it was just sort of an ache; you know, the kind of thing that makes you fidgety, 'cause you keep wanting to stretch them, and you can't walk up and down the aisles all the time —"

Audrey looked at me and put down the paper, "Then, apparently, the aches became shooting pains, and every time he flew — and it happened that he was doing a lot of flying at that point — it got more painful, until, as I said, he got himself a prescription for Percocet, I think. Yes, Percocet. He says he doesn't like taking it because it makes him feel groggy, and it doesn't knock the pain completely out — it just takes the edge off — and this whole business is beginning to affect his work because, as you can imagine, he's getting pretty reluctant to get on a plane, and his job depends to a great

extent on his willingness to fly."

"And hypnosis hasn't cracked it?"

"Nope, but the message definitely came through that his unconscious feels there's something about his legs that's important, that he should pay attention to. We haven't been able to dig up anything seminal about legs in his childhood, although he said something really interesting in the last session," she closed her eyes, trying to remember, "I think it was along the lines of: 'I have this feeling that there's something I'm not supposed to look at — taboo in some way — .'"

She opened her eyes and looked at me, "And that's why I thought maybe we could give MDMA a try, see if there's anything down inside there that can be shaken loose."

"How long does the pain last, after he's back on the ground?"

"He says it lingers for a few hours, then fades away completely."

"What makes you think," I asked her, "That it hasn't got something to do with cabin pressure, or some other conditions on board the plane? I mean, why do you — and he — think it's psychological?"

Audrey smiled, "He's pointed out, quite reasonably, that he's been flying the same airlines, in the same kinds of planes, for over twenty years, without any trouble. Then, all of a sudden, just when we've begun getting into some very loaded areas of his childhood, this brand new problem starts up. He says he senses there's something pushing at him from the inside, and the leg pain is a way for his unconscious to get his attention."

She grinned at me, "Who am I to argue, eh?"

I laughed and said, for the second time, "Sounds pretty insightful, your boy!"

Audrey said he was one of her favorite patients, "And it's probably because this guy learns fast and has a lot of courage, and he's the kind who makes use of everything I can give him. You know what I mean — he doesn't waste anything he gets; he grows."

"What was his reaction when you brought up the subject of MDMA?"

"He was surprised, of course, but his body language was positive; he leaned forward instead of sitting back, in other words," she smiled, illustrating both reactions with some exaggeration, "And once I'd explained the effects, and told him about the jaw-clench and nystagmus — especially the first time — he seemed mostly curious, and wanted to know how soon we could do it!"

I smiled, "Good for him!"

"He did his share of experimentation in college," Audrey added, "So the idea of altering his perceptions isn't a brand new one for him. And, of course, when I was summarizing its effects, I emphasized the fact that MDMA is not considered a psychedelic drug, and there is no loss of control

with it, as there can be with high doses of some psychedelics."

I asked, "What does he know about me, and how does he feel about having a stranger brought into this situation?"

Audrey smiled broadly, "I simply told him that you were my second mother, the good one, and that you had introduced me to this kind of therapy. I assured him that all he'd have to do is see your face, and he'd know he could trust you completely!"

I grinned, "Good grief!"

Audrey got up and gestured, "Come with me to the kitchen; I'm going to do a final check. He should be here any moment."

I sat down at the kitchen table, and watched Audrey as she brought out three bottles of juice from the refrigerator, naming them as she put them on the counter, "Tropical fruit, cranberry, Clamato. There — that pretty much does it!"

There was the sound of a door opening and closing in the front of the house, and a cheerful male voice called out, "Hey, Audrey? I'm here!"

"Come into the kitchen," Audrey shouted back.

I stood up and moved around the table, my eyes on the man coming through the door. He was tall and his body, in old jeans and a light blue cotton shirt, was obviously in good shape.

*Nice flat stomach. Intelligent face with clean bones, almost handsome. Grey in the hair; maybe mid-forties?*

He smiled at me, showing very white teeth, and searched my face openly while the introductions were being made, then leaned forward with a suggestion of a bow, and shook my hand. After that, he turned around to Audrey and gave her a big, rocking hug.

*Lovely smile, strong handshake. Eyes warm. Suspect he's got a good sense of humor.*

"Well, here I am!" he said, "Ready and willing — and starving, by the way — so I hope you have some coffee around because I need it, seriously!"

Audrey chuckled and handed him a mug of her morning brew, "Still up for it, huh?"

"Yup. My stomach's flip-flopping a bit, but that's to be expected, I guess."

"Sure," I said, "Anything new like this, your psyche has a big blank screen to project onto. All sorts of neat little anxieties tend to pop up when you're about to take a drug you haven't had before. By the way, I gather Audrey's told you that this material isn't a psychedelic. It does change consciousness, but you won't get any of the usual visual effects, unless you're a very rare bird indeed. There's a name for this kind of drug: entactogen. It means touching within."

"Entactogen?" said Dan, "Never heard the term."

"It was coined a very short time ago, and only a very, very few people have ever heard it. I like it, so I use it."

"Okay," said Daniel, agreeably, and sipped his coffee.

I continued, "Also, I'd like to reinforce what Audrey told you about this drug not threatening any loss of control; it just doesn't happen. It won't overwhelm you the way some of the psychedelics might. That just isn't the way it works."

Audrey asked him if he had made arrangements for getting himself home without having to drive. He said, "Yeah, all set. I got here by taxi, and I'll just call them when I'm ready to go. I didn't want to have to think up explanations for anyone I know. Six hours is a sort of unusually long time for a therapy session, and I could imagine a friend asking what the heck was going on, and why couldn't I just drive myself home, right?"

"Yes, of course," I said, "I think taxis are the best solution, as long as you don't live too far away."

Audrey took his empty coffee cup and patted his arm, "The fact is, honey, you'll probably be fine for driving when you're finished, but even when you're back to baseline there are sometimes light flashes at the edges of your field of vision, and they can be distracting. No use taking chances."

Daniel chose cranberry juice, and Audrey poured it carefully into the wine glass containing the MDMA powder. When she had finished, she handed the glass to Dan, and said directly to him, "I'm giving you exactly one hundred and twenty milligrams, which is the usual therapeutic dose; it should be enough to give you a full experience, but not enough to clobber you. Depending on how well you do with this amount, we can make adjustments in dosage for further sessions — if we decide to do further sessions."

I said, "After the first hour and a half, Dan, if you want to stay where you are for a while longer — if everything's working well for you — you can ask for a supplement, which is forty milligrams, and the only thing it'll do for you is simply extend the maximum effect, what we call the plateau, for another hour. It won't increase the effect at all, but it'll give you a longer plateau to work with. I should add: don't hesitate to turn it down; there are no have-to's in this experience, all right?"

"Right," said Dan.

There was a small silence, then Audrey handed me a tall glass of water with ice cubes in it, and raised one of her own, saying, "Blessings on us, and on this journey."

*Voice gentle; nicely spoken.*

When Dan had emptied his glass, Audrey rinsed it quickly under the tap. Then she took his hand and we all went into the living room, where

the sunlight greeted us. Audrey patted the designated patient-couch and told him, "This is your place. You can sit or walk around — whatever you want to do is okay. You won't feel much of anything for about half an hour, so just do whatever makes you most comfortable."

I sat down on the second couch and drank some of my ice water.

Dan went over to the large window that overlooked the garden in back. "I think I'll just stroll around outside and look at your pretty flowers, if you don't mind?"

"Stroll ahead," said Audrey, smiling. Then she snapped her fingers and held out a restraining hand. "I almost forgot. Dan, sit down for a moment. We're going to redo the contract."

"Oh?" He sat on the edge of the couch, his eyes on Audrey. She lowered herself slowly into the corner opposite me and asked him, "Do you remember the contract you made with me the first day?"

"Yeah, pretty much. Not the exact words, but the idea."

"Tell me as much as you remember, please."

"Sure," said Dan, "The one that sticks in my mind was that, if I should be tempted to go to the other side, if I have a chance to go through an opening of some kind that I know leads me to — to death, I swear that I won't go through it. In other words, if I'm tempted to die, for whatever reason, I must agree that I won't do that, because it would cause serious problems for you, and do damage to you, and I agree that I won't do anything that puts you in danger. Have I got that one right?"

"Terrific," said Audrey, leaning forward on her knees, "You can tell me, talk to me about what you feel; just don't act on it. Now the other two — can you remember the other conditions?"

"Ummm — yeah, I think one had to do with getting aggressive. If I get very angry about something or feel real hostility toward you, for some reason, I can talk about it, I can yell or shout and make noise, if I need to, but I agree not to turn it into physical action, right?"

"You agree not to act out physically against me or my property, yes."

"And, if I remember correctly, the third rule had to do with sexual feelings. Same thing as the aggressive stuff. I can talk about it all I want, but I agree not to act out the feelings when I'm working with you."

"You've got it, honey. Now, what Alice and I need from you is an agreement that the contract applies also to this kind of session. When you're in an altered state brought on by a drug, the same rules apply as when your altered state is due to hypnotic trance."

Dan's face wore an expression of seriousness. He said, "Absolutely. Agreed." Then he looked over at me, and a hint of curiosity played in his eyes. I smiled very slightly and nodded my head, but said nothing.

"Oh, yes," said Audrey, "I almost forgot again. About phone calls."

She proceeded to give him the warning about discussing his own personal experience with this — or any other — drug over the phone. Dan said, "Sure. That's easy to remember."

"That's it," Audrey smiled, rising from the couch, "Wander around outside, if you'd like. Alice and I will be right here if you need us. After I get some juice and ice water out on the table, that is. Just take me a sec." And she was gone.

Dan paused at the back door and looked around the room, as if trying to memorize it. I knew he had been here before, so I guessed he might be looking at his surroundings with a view to having his perspective changed in some way by the drug.

By the time Audrey had reappeared with a full pitcher of ice water and the bottle of cranberry juice, Dan was outside. She put everything in the middle of the big coffee table and left the room again, returning with clean glasses, one of which she filled with water and placed on a small end table next to the patient couch.

I rose and went to the window, where Audrey joined me. Silently, we watched the lean figure, hands in pockets, moving slowly around the flowerbeds, occasionally stooping to inspect a plant or open blossom.

I met her eyes and grinned, "I like your Daniel, kiddo."

"Isn't he a sweetheart?" Suddenly, she whirled around and took off again, muttering something that sounded like, "Gotta get Mike."

*Who the hell is Mike?*

I had just curled up again in my corner of the couch when Audrey hurried in, her hands clutching a tangle of recording equipment, and I laughed.

"What?" She knelt at the coffee table and spilled the mess onto its top. She gave me a quick glance, "What's funny?"

"I just understood what you were mumbling about, that's all."

"Mumble? Me? I never mumble," she mumbled, taping the black metal stand of a microphone onto the table.

"Can I help?"

"No, no," Audrey said, "Almost done. Just have to attach the framdiddle to the whompus, and we're ready."

The back door opened and Dan came in. His face had changed. There was a suggestion of softness around the mouth, and expanding pupils made his eyes large and liquid. He made a small attempt at a smile, "Well, I guess I'm turning on. It sure isn't like anything I've felt before — it's really different."

Moving slowly, like a man with hurting bones, he let himself down onto the couch, and sat there, hands spread on his thighs.



*Body language says What the hell is happening to me?*

I spoke gently, "What you're feeling now is the strangeness of a sensation you haven't had before, Dan. If you were a child, it wouldn't seem so — so surprising, because everything's new in a child's world, but grownups don't have that experience very often. Just let yourself go with it; don't push against it. In a few minutes, as the feeling becomes more familiar, it'll mellow out."

Dan nodded. He had stopped trying to smile.

*Good — good. Dropping the social face, letting himself be real.*

Audrey, finished with hookups and recording machines, paused in front of me, her back to Daniel, and made a triumphant circle with forefinger and thumb, close to her waist, then took her place on our couch, feet curled up beneath her.

I continued speaking to Dan, a bit more slowly than usual, my voice gradually slipping into lullaby rhythm, in order to get through to the unconscious, "Remember you're in a safe place, Dan. You have all the time in the world to do whatever you want to do. There are no deadlines, no expectations. Let your body relax while you go through this transition phase. You're completely safe, and we're both here for you at all times."

*Stay with simple messages, right now, to reassure the child inside.*

I glanced at my watch. It had been forty minutes since the ceremony in the kitchen.

*He'll plateau pretty soon now.*

"How're you feeling, Dan?" Audrey's voice, too, had gone mother-soft.

He replied with a deep sigh, then eased himself back against the cushions and sat there, arms resting loosely at his sides. He looked at Audrey and me and smiled, and we both exhaled. The smile was full, unselfconscious, and told us exactly what we wanted to know.

We smiled back at him and at each other, then Audrey chuckled and I heard myself laugh in delight.

"Yes," said Dan, eyes smiling along with the mouth.

*Now Audrey and I can relax our own masks, and touch him directly with affection — and affirmation — and whatever else he needs.*

I looked down at my watch again and told him, "You've probably reached the plateau by this time. Which means that where you are now — the way you feel — is where you'll stay for the next hour. There won't be any further increase in the intensity."

"All right. Thank you. It's a great place to stay."

*As soon as he let himself go with the strange feeling — stopped fighting it — he opened up to this, this place of being at peace and blessed.*

"Let's get to work, my dear," said Audrey, very gently, "Time to

stretch out there and let yourself go into trance."

I interrupted, "Before you get fully settled, Dan, please take a drink of water from that glass on the table near you, and we'll keep reminding you to drink, every now and then. MDMA can be quite dehydrating, so it's important."

After several healthy swigs from his glass, Dan lay down at full length on the couch, with a small throw pillow covered in Thai silk under his head. He closed his eyes.

*He's been doing this for a good part of a year, so he must be pretty good at it. The MDMA should make it easier for him to go way down.*

There was a sunlit silence in the large room and the sense of peacefulness was so complete, I wondered for a moment if Dan might fall asleep.

I looked at the way his body lay, hands relaxed, fingers loosely curled at his sides. His mouth was slightly open.

I focused all my attention on him, opening myself to whatever I could feel of his state, letting myself swim into the contact high.

From the garden, bird sounds rose and fell in long waves.

Audrey spoke softly, "How are your legs, Dan?"

We watched as his hands moved, hesitatingly, onto his thighs, then froze, fingers outspread.

Suddenly, he sat upright, eyes wide open, and exploded, "Jesus CHRIST!" He swung his legs onto the floor and sat there, on the edge of the cushion, leaning forward, his hands spread again on the tops of his thighs, his face showing astonishment as he gazed at something we couldn't see. Audrey and I waited quietly, watching him, barely breathing.

"How could I have forgotten it? How could I!" he exclaimed, his voice choked, "I can see it happening right in front of me, like it was just a couple of minutes ago."

"Tell us," whispered Audrey.

Dan had turned in our direction, but his eyes weren't seeing us.

"The roof fell in," he whispered, "No warning. We were sitting there at our desks and the ceiling came down on us."

He dropped his head into his hands, for a moment, then sat up straight and continued talking out loud, more to himself than to Audrey or me.

"Second grade. I was trapped under my desk. Both my legs were trapped; I couldn't pull them out. I remember choking on the white dust. People were crying all around. Guess I was crying, too. The next thing I knew, I was outside on the playground, and our teacher was making us line up — telling us to be quiet, everything was all right — and I can see the yellow collar of the boy in front of me in the line. There was a smudge of

blood on the collar, and I was staring at it, not really thinking of anything at all, just doing what the teacher said. I guess I was in shock or something. I couldn't figure out how I got outside. Yes, I remember I was thinking, 'How did I get out? How did I get my legs out?' All I could remember was being down on the floor, with my legs hurting. Nothing else 'til I found myself here, standing in line."

*He's right there, reliving it. He's standing in that line, wondering what happened, looking at blood on the back of a friend's collar.*

I spoke quietly, not wanting to get in the way of his images, "You forgot all this?"

"In — in all these years — since the second grade, I haven't remembered it. How could I forget something so — so awful, so terrifying? How could a thing like that just disappear?"

Audrey and I exchanged glances, but kept quiet.

He sat for a moment with his head bowed, hands clasped together between his knees, then eased himself back again onto the couch, lying full length, eyes closed.

After a few moments of silence, Dan's hands went up to his head, feeling around, "I had a bandage on my head. A big bandage wrapped all around my head. It was on me for a long time. Oh, yes," he continued, urgently, "I remember the day they let me out of the house for the first time since I got hurt, and they told me I could walk down the porch steps, onto the front lawn, but only if I moved very slowly and carefully. I must have had a concussion; that would explain it." He paused, then went on,

"I thought I had to walk slowly because something was still wrong with my legs. I don't think I really paid much attention to my head at all."

He seemed to hesitate, then closed his mouth and swallowed.

*Dry throat. If I remind him to drink some water, it may interrupt the memories. Wait a bit.*

In the warm quiet of the room, I could hear the birds again. Then Dan spoke haltingly, "I can hear my mother's voice. At the table. We were eating supper, and my father — my father was the principal of the school, so it was a terrible thing for him, too, that ceiling coming down on all of us. And my mother is saying, 'We're going to forget all about what happened today. We will never talk about it, any of us. You children,' — my sister was sitting next to me, I remember — 'And your daddy and me. Nothing's to be gained by going over and over it. After today, it'll be like it never happened. Everything will be all right, if we just put it out of our minds.'"

I glanced at Audrey and caught her nodding to herself, then realized I was doing the same thing.

*Oh boy! You don't often get to hear the actual words of an early childhood programming!*

Dan sighed deeply again, and Audrey sat up, her mouth opening, but he spoke first, "I'm remembering something else, something that really bugged me after it happened, because I couldn't figure it out. I think I know what was going on, now."

Audrey silently clapped one hand over her mouth, then grinned at me and curled up again in her corner.

"When I was around sixteen, I got a summer job painting the old school — I thought of it as my father's school, because he was still principal — and I was working with my friend, Chuck, and one day I was supposed to paint the walls at the north end of the building and I just didn't want to do it; I had this weird sick feeling when I took my ladder over to that part of the school, and I couldn't figure out why, but I knew I couldn't paint there, and I told Chuck I would exchange with him. We usually flipped a coin to find out which of us would paint this or that, and he'd lost the last flip; he was stuck with the job of painting the basement, with all the pipes and stuff, and he couldn't understand why I'd want to work down there, when I could have the much easier job up on top. I couldn't explain it to him, because I didn't know myself; I only knew I didn't want to mess with that end of the building, like it was haunted or something. Now, for the first time, I understand what all that was about. It was the second grade classroom; that's where it was — at the north end. I didn't remember a damn thing about the roof falling on top of us, not one thing. I just knew I had to stay away from that part of the school."

"Wow," muttered Audrey, and I whispered to myself, "Yes, yes."

Silence settled on the room again. Then Dan spoke, hesitatingly, as if feeling out an idea, "You know, it may be just coincidence, but the only accidents I've had — the only times I've had something happen to me, to my body — it's always my legs that've been hurt. Always my legs. Like, once when I was a teenager and I was in a warehouse, with a friend of mine — we were fooling around in there, I don't remember how or why — and he got into this loader and fiddled around and it started up and he didn't know how to stop it, and just before he got the brakes working, he pinned me — the big metal lifter in front of it pinned my legs against a wall. He got hold of the brakes, and stopped the thing. All I got out of it were some bad bruises."

"What do you — " Audrey began, but stopped when Dan waved a hand in a gesture that said clearly, Wait, there's more.

"And then, about ten years ago, I was in a small plane crash in Oregon, and the only part of me that got hurt was my legs. Just bruising again, but not my shoulder, not my arm; again, it was my legs."

This time, we didn't interrupt the silence. Then, suddenly, he sat up, swung his feet to the floor again and sat there, looking directly at Audrey and me.

"This is amazing," he said, "Remembering this stuff. Bam, bam, bam! One memory after another. All about the legs."

"It sounds as if it's all about repressed memory, what it can do," said Audrey.

"Repressed memory has tremendous energy," I added, "When you put a lid on a powerful experience like that ceiling falling in, and your legs being trapped, the push of the feelings, the pressure of the emotions, remains in your psyche. And in your body. It looks as if that day in the second grade built up a hell of a charge inside you — the fear, the shock, anger at the helplessness — and with that lid on it, it couldn't disperse. If you'd been able to talk about it, relive it, over and over again, until it got to be old stuff, and boring —"

"— it's even possible that none of those later leg events would have happened," finished Audrey, adding, "Of course, that's a wild intuitive guess, and I can't support it logically, but it's interesting to speculate, just for the hell of it!"

"That's WEIRD," said Dan, grinning widely, "Real Twilight Zone. I guess we'll never know."

We spent the rest of the session listening to Dan as he relived in detail the newly opened memory of the original trauma, and all that had happened since that horrifying moment in the second grade classroom.

Neither Audrey nor I remembered to ask if he wanted a supplement of the MDMA until about two hours had gone by, when I happened to look at my watch and realized that the 1-1/2 hour point had long passed. Audrey and I embarked on an apology for having lost track of the time, but Dan interrupted us, waving a hand to stem the word-tide; "I'm just fine," he said, grinning, "This has been great, a fantastic experience, and I don't mind going without the supplement. I feel good, really at peace now with the whole thing. Going over it with you like this — that's what I needed to do, I know it. Maybe this'll stop the leg pains."

"It should," said Audrey, "I'd be very surprised if you have any more trouble when you fly. I can't wait to find out!"

I joined in the laughter.

Six weeks later, Audrey phoned me at home, and told me she had heard from Dan that morning.

"Yeah?"

"He told me he'd just returned from a round trip back east on United Airlines."

"And?"

"No pain. Not even a dull ache. He wanted me to tell you that he loves you, too!"

"Holy Christmas!" I said, "The great Snake Oil strikes again!"

"Snake oil?"

I explained, "Shura often says that MDMA reminds him of the old snake oil remedies traveling salesmen used to sell from wagons all across the country: good for whatever ails you!"

"Incredible stuff," agreed Audrey, "And he certainly used it, bless him. He dived — or is that 'dove' — right in, and got the job done."

"I think it may be 'dove,' kid," I said, "But I won't hold it against you."

"Thanks a bunch," she laughed, "Anyway, I thought you'd want to be the second to know."

"Thanks, honey. Looks like we done good, hey?"

Dan — as far as I know — never again took MDMA; he didn't ask for a second session, and neither Audrey nor I suggested one. It had opened up in him what needed to be opened, and allowed him to free himself of a subtle anxiety which had been a constant presence at the edges of his life for several decades. He told us that he was immensely grateful, and felt that he could now go ahead and finish his hypnotherapy with Audrey, and get on with his life, as he put it. And, with our blessings, that is what he did. Within a year, he had fallen in love with a co-worker in his company's main office and, the last time I heard about him, he was married and expecting his first child. His legs gave him no further trouble.

## REVIVING AN ANCIENT ART

Over the next two years, Audrey and I developed our own way of doing the intensives. We had no known model (except, of course, what we had experienced in working together); we came to hear of many (unnamed) others doing work of this kind, but none of those maverick therapists were publishing, either, so we had nobody to ask for advice. I have to admit that this didn't cause either of us much worry; we were growing confident in our own abilities and believed that our system worked exceedingly well.

Both of us were learning with every session; I, of course, had much more to learn than did Audrey, but doing the intensive work was new territory for both of us, so we often felt as if we were breaking new ground. Then, over time, it began to dawn on us that this kind of process was probably as old as mankind; it's just that the ancient practitioners called it by other names, and used local plants which were known to open the inner eyes and ears.

Eventually, most of our work came to be that of helping our patients deal with their Shadow (the term used by Carl Jung) or dark side, which I came to call the Beast-Survivor. It always begins as the primal Survivor, a part of the child that is concerned only with his own survival (physical and emotional), his comfort and his self-validation. It is a normal part of every

one of us, and includes whatever we are born with that is instinctual, uncensored and "natural." Some of these energies — like anger and frustration — are potentially dangerous to others and the growing child must be taught to exercise control over them. Others are potential sources of creativity, and should be nurtured and developed.

As the child grows up and is increasingly shaped by the approval and censure of others, being reminded that This is Good and That is Bad, he gradually learns to control and repress many of the natural urges and impulses that his teachers and his particular culture consider unacceptable.

The Beast part of the Beast-Survivor begins to take shape if the parents and guides condemn not only the child's actions, but the child himself, instilling shame and self-rejection along with social instruction. Then the repressed feelings and urges begin to assume the outline of a terrible, hateful Thing in the dark cellar of the unconscious. In Audrey's own case, it had become a big, black, filthy spider. A strongly religious Catholic may unconsciously give his own Shadow the form of the Devil, itself.

In other words, if the child is taught with love and respect, by wise teachers, he will come to understand that it is necessary to control certain natural desires and instincts in order to become an accepted member of his family and tribe. But he will *not* be taught that these natural energies are wicked or shameful in and of themselves. As he grows, he will come to feel empathy with other beings — human and animal — which will give him further incentive to exercise control over certain impulses. His Shadow or dark side can be expected to serve him as a source of creative expression and new concepts, and the Survivor aspect of it will continue to function as the protector it was meant to be.

(There are many works of art, literature and music that illustrate and make use of the Shadow. The works of the artist H. R. Giger, who created the backgrounds and the ferocious monster in the movie, "Alien;" the stories written by Stephen King; the music of Igor Stravinsky, especially "Rites of Spring;" these are only three modern examples of creations by people who have had access — consciously or not — to their own dark sides.)

But if the child is taught to be ashamed and to see himself as inherently "evil," he will not just control his instinctual desires; he will eventually come to deny the very existence of those feelings within himself. Sometimes, this fearful repression can create in the unconscious an interior judge, jury, and potential executioner.

Spiritual growth must eventually involve a confrontation with the Beast-Survivor, which often takes the shape of a large, powerful animal. (Over the two years we worked together, Audrey and I met three wolves, five jungle cats, and two gorillas.)

The goal was to have the patient meet and get to know the hidden beast in the cellar, to move into it and feel its nature. This step in the process is one of the most terrifying things any human being can undertake, and requires great persistence and immense courage. The prospect of seeing what he unconsciously believes to be the core, the essence of himself as a horrendous, malignant, totally unacceptable entity, can bring about a state of fear that has no parallel in ordinary life.

No person can be asked to do the work of confronting his Shadow or beast without being told by his therapist, in advance, that what he will see and feel is *not* the whole truth about who he is, but only an important and essential part. There should be a great deal of discussion before any drug ingestion about the nature and function of the Beast-Survivor. The therapist should emphasize the patient's need to feel compassion for the innocent child he had been and to understand why and how that child developed certain habits of behavior and emotional response to his environment, in an effort to survive in a world he wasn't equipped to deal with or control.

All these explanations and reassurances should take place before the patient makes a final decision about taking MDMA or any psychedelic drug. It is essential preparation because, without it, the drug session might be wasted. When the unconscious psyche anticipates the possible destruction of a needed and long-nurtured positive self-image, when the Survivor hears footsteps outside the massive door that has guarded his monster aspect from view most of his life, one result may well be a complete lack of response to the drug. No insight, no images, no nuthin'. Or there may be the eruption of an acute anxiety state which thoroughly blankets any other effects and distracts the attention of everyone involved.

Having talked to a Jungian analyst about this whole process, I've concluded that there is one important way in which psychedelic exploration differs from Jungian analysis, when it involves facing and dealing with the Shadow. A Jungian therapist will encourage his client to see his Shadow as clearly as he can—see what shape it takes, sense what its qualities are—and then continue working on understanding its origins and functions. But a therapist working with MDMA or a psychedelic drug will gently help his patient to take one additional step. When the patient has full view of what I've been referring to as the Beast-Survivor or monster, he will then be urged to first face, then enter into the dark figure he is meeting; he must work to get inside its skin and look out through its eyes.

It is at this point that a battle may have to be fought, because not only does the conscious person have to fight his own revulsion, shame and fear of this forbidden aspect of himself, but he may project upon the monster an equal resistance to being made visible to the conscious mind. The more buried the monster is, the more power it gathers; only by staying in the



cellar, unseen and unfronted, can it continue having an influence on the patient's life, and it does not give up that power willingly.

Now and then, one finds a patient who seems to be able, once he has come face to face with this part of himself, to step right into it. Others must fight to get there, with strong, patient, loving support and encouragement from the therapist.

When the patient succeeds in deliberately stepping into his beast and looking out its eyes, his first response is usually astonishment at an unaccustomed absence of fear. The second is appreciation, then frank exhilaration at the sense of powerfulness that characterizes this creature. (This stage of getting to know the beast from the inside may take more than one session, but I have also seen the process finished in a single day.)

When this part of the work has been completed successfully, the patient begins learning to accept his beast and to understand how it took shape. Gradually, the Beast-Survivor begins to transform. With time and the support of his therapist, the patient allows himself to feel more and more compassion for the original child within the monster and, as he does so, the beast slowly disintegrates and only the hurt and fearful child remains. The rest of the work is gradual re-parenting and validation of the child, until he is able to merge with his grown-up self.

The Survivor, however, remains. When exposed to the conscious mind, and given respect and even possibly a bit of affection, it becomes the ally and protector it was intended to be. It is concerned only with the safety and welfare of its host. It will never be entirely housebroken or have good table manners, but it will be available as a totally loyal and devoted defender of the whole, integrated Self.

(In some cultures, this aspect of the psyche, when consciously understood and accepted, is called a "power animal.")

I developed a new respect for the old, classic fairy tales, coming to recognize certain ones as disguised descriptions of spiritual journeys and processes. The story most obviously applicable to dark side transformation work is "Beauty and the Beast." There are others, but that is the most outstanding example of a so-called fairy tale which describes coming to terms with one's Beast-Survivor, and the spiritual integration that results when the work is completed. ("They were married and lived happily ever after.")

Our intensives lasted a minimum of six hours. Neither of us took time out, except to go to the bathroom, or when Audrey would excuse herself for a few minutes, to make a sandwich in her kitchen so that she could maintain her energy. She always offered food to the client, but it was usually turned down. The patient was actively encouraged to sip water or juice all through the session to avoid dehydration.

We used MDMA with every one of these carefully selected patients.

Eventually, with certain ones who wanted to go deeper and further into their own interiors, we eventually tried 2C-B, (4-bromo-2,5-dimethoxy phenethylamine), which is a true psychedelic. It was also — at that time — not illegal. One of the advantages of working with 2C-B was that its effects were not as long-lasting as most other psychedelics, and the patient could usually expect to go home within eight to ten hours.

We thought of MDMA as the emotional and spiritual opener, the drug which allowed a patient to do intense insight work without fear of what he would find at the core of himself. MDMA had a particular magic; it gave the patient the ability to accept the whole of who he was — positive and negative, light and dark — without defensiveness. This enabled him to delve into his dark side, to explore the Beast-Survivor with minimum fear, and to eventually come to terms with that essential aspect of himself. MDMA was, indeed, penicillin for the soul.

I always thought of 2C-B as the gut-opener, in the sense that it opened up the deep energies of the psyche, and gave access to the part of the person that communicates with itself through archetypal imagery. It also emphasized the patient's connection with his body, since all the physical senses were sharpened. A good experience with 2C-B allowed for exploration and validation of the Survivor and its proper function as self-protector. Like most psychedelics, it brought the spiritual world into direct connection with the life of the body, and let the patient celebrate fully the fact that he was alive and healthy, a soul within a cherished human form.

In several cases, a single 2C-B session was used as a final experience for patients who had worked hard and courageously in the mine-fields of their own unconscious minds. They had used MDMA and the trance state to examine and acknowledge their long-hidden emotional programming from childhood, and they had learned how to change what needed changing. They were ready to move on by themselves, or perhaps to find new teachers for further spiritual growth.

Twice, the final session was not with 2C-B, but mescaline, which was illegal. Both Audrey and I considered this to be one of the most honored and respected Great Ones among visionary drugs. We used it with two people, both of whom had achieved deep, life-changing transformations after many months of intense and difficult work. The difference between 2C-B and mescaline, we felt, was a subtle but important one. While 2C-B unlocked doors to the archetypal images and the intense emotions that accompanied them, mescaline was even more of a spiritual opener and could introduce the patient to a landscape where light infused everything — people, plants and animals — and there was direct connection with what is called the "numinous."

When Audrey was working with a patient in the trance state, she spoke slowly, gently, unless there was reason to say something sharp and

sudden. She was quietly persuasive and always prepared to stop talking if she detected an impulse to speak on the part of the patient. I was amazed at how acutely perceptive she was, and I found myself, over the months that we worked together, learning to watch the patient's face and body carefully, as she did, until I found myself picking up clues so subtle, I sometimes felt I was using some other sense than mere eyesight.

Somewhere during the second year, I learned to perceive emotional blocks in the body of a patient as he lay on the couch, deep in trance and the drug effect. I never saw colors, as many people do when they are sensitive to auras; what I saw — or felt — would usually be something like a grey, heavy mass located around the abdominal area, and what it meant to me was that the patient had a block formed by fear and sorrow, and deeply buried rage, which was making it hard for him to release negative emotions.

My response to such an impression would be to remind him that he was in a safe place, and — if it seemed appropriate for this patient — to tell him about the fire mountain located just above his navel. I would say something like this: "You can fly over the top of the volcano like a bird, and look down on it. Tell me when you're there."

When the patient said he was in the air over the volcano, I would go on.

"You'll see a small opening, and inside that opening is the deep red of the lava. Stay where you are, in the sky, looking down at that hole, and decide how much lava you want to release. The lava is rage and sorrow, and it's been gathering there for most of your life. You can make the opening as large or as small as you wish.

"I want you to know that you can safely let flow some of that burning fire, let it flow down from the top of the volcano, just as much or as little as you feel it's okay to let out. It won't burn up the world, it'll just burn bushes and trees on the side of the mountain, and that's okay. You have complete control over how much you let out, so you don't have to be afraid of the mountain exploding and destroying everything in sight; it won't. Just let flow as much as you want, and when you've released enough, you can close up the hole again, and stop the flow. It's your volcano; you can do whatever you wish with it."

This image proved to be one of the most effective for such patients, giving them conscious control over a needed but immensely frightening exposure to the searing heat of long-repressed rage, pain and grief.

An extraordinary relationship developed between Audrey and me as we sat at opposite ends of the therapist's couch; sometimes one of us would fall silent, momentarily at a loss for an appropriate response to something said by the patient; invariably, the other would find the answer rising instantly in the mind, emerging in exactly the right words. There were times when we seemed almost telepathic; we shared moments of

knowing that we were, separately and together, a conduit, a means by which something Other, immensely loving and healing, was making itself felt and heard. When — now and then — it spoke through us, we could feel it happening. Then there would be a stillness, a sense of time having stopped, a peacefulness permeating the room.

I thought of it as an experience of the sacred, a gift of Grace. After such a moment out of time, the patient would usually sigh deeply, Audrey and I would nod to each other, and the work would continue.

To do this kind of psychotherapy, it is essential that the therapist lay aside all preconceived theories and belief systems, either psychological or spiritual, as much as possible. Her (or his) attitude must be that of a student, learning a new part of the universe, seeing it for the first time. The patient is a new world, unlike any other she has previously encountered, and the therapist must be ready to learn a language of symbol and imagery peculiar to that world. She has to keep her eyes and ears open and all her antennae alert, so that she might begin to get a glimpse of the emotional and spiritual structures and rules of survival that inform life in this unique human landscape.

It is important to remember that the patient's psyche contains a part which is a self-healer, and the patient should be told of the existence of that healer within because by telling him, the therapist will help activate it.

There is another rule which I believe must be observed by any therapist undertaking this kind of journey with a patient. She has to be able to feel something very close to love for the person she is guiding. There should be real caring, not simply an intellectual concern for the patient's welfare.

Real caring, like love, cannot be forced, as we all know, and the therapist should have sufficient insight of her own to be aware of what her feelings towards the patient really are. If there is even the slightest hostility or apprehension, she must be prepared to do the necessary insight work to discover the reason for those feelings, and to work on whatever projections may be involved. If she cannot completely resolve them, she should direct the patient to another therapist. I'm not talking about such feelings as momentary irritation or impatience; those can come naturally in response to many things, and don't negate basic love or caring.

It is in connection with this ability to affirm and care about her client that the therapist's own past training with MDMA and psychedelic drugs becomes important. If she has sufficient experience of her own with these tools, she will have — she should have — taken certain spiritual steps which will have brought her to specific places within herself. One of these interior places or states is the often-referred-to "participation mystique," and this frequently happens in the first MDMA or psychedelic experience, if the session is conducted (as it should be) in quiet natural surroundings. I have

described this state in the earlier chapter, "Places in the Mind."

She will have felt the sense of kinship with every living thing, and she will have known — this is deep core knowing, not intellectual knowing — that every animal, plant and human being is related to her. She will have seen and felt that everything alive carries within it the God-essence, a spark of the Great Spirit, and that indeed we are all highly individual parts of one living, conscious Being. What may have appealed to her before as nothing more than a beautiful, poetic concept, will suddenly have taken the form of reality, and the profound impact of this realization will have become part of her for the rest of her life.

That is why, once she has had the privilege of being in this place in her soul, she will find it possible to feel true caring, even love, for a patient who is preparing to open himself to himself. She will know that this person she is working with is, in a spiritual sense, her parent, her brother, and her child.

I finally brought my participation in the intensives to an end when it became increasingly clear that doing them once or twice a week was extraordinarily draining of both physical and emotional energy, and I needed those energies for writing a book with Shura.

It's been many years since I worked as a psychedelic therapist, and Shura and I are still writing. I miss the excitement and continual learning, the exploration of other people's interior worlds, and helping them achieve clarity, self-love and integration. It has been a tremendous privilege to have participated in this kind of process, and I feel truly blessed.

But now I can talk about it, while those who are still quietly and secretly conducting these kinds of transformative sessions cannot speak out, and will not be able to share their experiences and accumulated knowledge until the current, unspeakably wrong laws regarding psychedelics and visionary plants are eliminated in the United States and everywhere else. Until then, an ancient healing practice in modern form will continue to be a criminal act, and the wisdom gained from it lost to all except a small group of therapists and their patients.

Part Three:

Tryptamina Botanica

## CHAPTER 15. DMT IS EVERYWHERE

(Shura's voice)

Many, many years ago I put a Pendaflex folder into what was then my one and only filing cabinet (second drawer from the top as I remember) into which I would toss the occasional paper that I might come across that would mention DMT (N,N-dimethyltryptamine) as a component of some plant. Then I would come across a couple of papers that described some pharmacology of DMT, and this called for a new folder. Another paper would appear that discussed plant decoctions used in South American native rituals and ceremonies that could well involve DMT. Some native brews clearly indicated the use of more than one plant. Another folder? Then, I found papers concerning anthropological studies of certain of these native peoples, involving other plant mixtures as sacraments, which did not even hint at any DMT content. I began to appreciate the horrors associated with the filing of information when it can be interconnected by several organizing threads. There is a drug (chemistry), and a plant (botany) that produces an effect (pharmacology) in some people out there (anthropology) that might have some healing use (medicine) or some spiritual impact (theology).

This introduction is an unfairly simplified presentation of factual information when one considers that all of these classes are indeed not simple, single entries but can, in fact, be multiple combinations. The "drug" can be a mixture of a number of chemicals, some of which may never have been identified, named, or even characterized. The "plant" may be a mixture involving trees, or vines, flowers or grasses, none of which can be easily distinguished or identified. The effects observed can be complicated by the fact that they are reported within a cultural context involving superstitions, customs, tradition, and mythology, all without any written record. And the description of the use was from an observer who stands outside of the cultural milieu of the event observed, who has a Western scientific knowledge of chemistry, botany, pharmacology, anthropology,

medicine, or theology, and will see everything through his own set of glasses.

Many years ago my dream was to put together a complete review of the snuffing/drinking/smoking world of ethnobotany into one place, and write the total story. But even then, it was too complex and interdisciplinary, and I abandoned ship.

Today I have not just one folder, but a couple of file cabinet drawers filled with information about these areas. They include published reprints, literature searches, correspondence, and my own research notes. I am twenty-five years older, I have twenty-five times the quantity of data, and the area is twenty five times more complex and convoluted that was in one of my filing cabinets. No one can write a complete review of this area, and even if it were to magically appear, no one could read it to find just what he needed, as every reader has different needs.

Since I see myself as a chemist, I have decided to use the vocabulary of chemistry and let all the other structures of organization evolve as needed. Here is the major component of interest, there are the plants where it can be found, and finally this is the context of its usage. Perhaps this is an arbitrary hierarchy, but some hierarchy is needed and I have chosen this. So let me look on the turn-ons and the nostrums of the world first as chemical entities, and then explore the subtleties of interactions between them and their congeners (other things found alongside them), as contributors to the psychedelic scene.

What is on top of the pile? N,N-Dimethyltryptamine, or DMT, of course. A bit of chronological history of both the drug and the drug law might be appropriate here, as the year 1966 is an interesting point of confluence of both stories. DMT was first synthesized in 1931 by Manske. It was isolated from two plant sources independently in 1946 by Goncalves de Lima (from *Mimosa hostilis*) and in 1955 by Fish, Johnson and Horning (from *Piptadenia peregrina*). Its human activity as a synthetic entity was first reported in 1956 by Szára. The first legal restrictions were placed on research with it in 1966 in response to its increasing popularity following the writings of Burroughs, Metzner, Leary and others in the early 1960's, and it was observed as being a component of the healthy human brain (and maybe a neurotransmitter) in 1976 by Christian.

The year 1965 launched the era of the use of initials as both drug and organization names in Federal law enforcement. It was then that the Drug Abuse Control Amendments were enacted and became effective, inspired to some measure by the psychedelic "hippie" movement in the younger generation at that time. This led to the formation of the BDAC (Bureau of Drug Abuse Control) which was put under the authority of the Food and Drug Administration (the FDA). These amendments were written to attempt to control non-narcotic drugs (called dangerous drugs) with ex-



amples offered such as DMT, LSD, DET, ibogaine, bufotenine, DOM, MDA, MDMA and TMA. This was a bureau that was parallel to, but non-overlapping, the already existing FBN (Federal Bureau of Narcotics), which was dedicated exclusively to the control of the three known narcotic drugs, heroin, cocaine and marijuana. In 1968, the BDAC (under the Department of HEW) was merged with the FBN (under the Department of the Treasury) to create the BNDD (Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs) under the Department of Justice. At the time of the passage of the Controlled Substance Act (in 1970, the first new drug law since the Harrison Narcotics Act of 1914) a number of competing splinter groups were being formed such as ODALE (Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement) and ONNI (Office of National Narcotics Intelligence). In 1973, the BNDD, ODALE and ONNI, along with the enforcement and intelligence functions of the U.S. Customs, were melded into still another group, the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration). And that is where things have rested up to the present time, except for a failed attempt (in 1982) to merge the DEA with the FBI. The latter group was to have run the show, and the DEA effectively rebelled.

In a sense, DMT is to the world of indolic psychedelics what mescaline is to the world of phenethylamine psychedelics. It is the starting point of both our classification and understanding of the hallucinogenic psychedelics, and from it our entire understanding of the relationship between structure and activity must evolve. So let me try an organizational scheme that asks; (1) what is the chemical? (2) where is it found? and (3) what does it do?

In answer to (1), the chemical is N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) which is an in-house shortcut way of saying 3-(N,N-dimethylaminoethyl)-indole. It is N,N-dimethyltryptophan without the carboxyl group. It is bufotenine or psilocin without the hydroxyl group. (2), DMT is, most simply, almost everywhere you choose to look. It is in this flower here, in that tree over there, and in yonder animal. The whereness is, in effect, the stuff of this chapter. And (3), it is a relatively short-lived psychedelic compound that has a record of ancient and revered use in many cultures of the world. To some users, it is a connection to a vivid world of magic and mystical beings. To others, it is a dark exposure to the most negative aspects of the psyche. And everything in-between. This is discussed in greater detail in the recipe on DMT. This chapter is pretty much limited to a listing of some of the natural sources of this drug.

## MARINE WORLD

I am a bit uncomfortable in talking about alkaloids to be found in the marine world. There is no real agreement amongst chemists as to just what an alkaloid is. It is common to say that a natural product is an alkaloid

if it meets a certain number of criteria, but there are so many devious exceptions that any definition can be voided. The accepted minimum is that it is a basic (in the chemical sense), organic compound that contains nitrogen, and comes from natural sources. Both the words alkali and alkaloid come from the Arabic "al-qili" meaning, literally, from the ashes. Often an added definition is that it should be modestly complex, as a way of excluding compounds such as cyanide and urea. Certainly they can be extremely weak bases, as with amides such as caffeine in coffee, or capsaicin in pepper. These are incontestably alkaloids even though they are substantially neutral. Quaternary amine salts such as candicine (from many cacti) or its positional isomer leptodactyline (from the skins of frogs) are actually acidic, but some insist that they are still alkaloids. Biological activity is not a useful criteria, as many natural alkaloids are without known pharmacology, and many pharmacologically potent compounds from nature don't even contain nitrogen. And many people assume that such a compound has to come from a plant source. Not so. There are many animals that carry tryptamines as part of their chemistry, and DMT is one of the most common of these.

A surprising number of natural products from the sea contain bromine. With chlorine being the most common halide in sea salt I have always been amazed that the supreme intelligence that designs and builds things such as alkaloids in the ocean would choose to use the bromine atom which is hundreds of times more scarce in sea water than is the chlorine atom. But the interesting question, "Why use bromine rather than chlorine in constructing marine alkaloids?" must wait its turn behind the even grander question of, "Why make alkaloids at all?" The answer to this is still unknown. It is just Nature's way.

Sponges have proven to be a source of brominated tryptamines. *Smenospongia maynordii* (a genus earlier known as *Polyfibrospongia*) has been shown to contain 5,6-dibromotryptamine and its N-mono-methyl homologue (dibromo-NMT). The corresponding DMT counterpart (5,6-dibromo-DMT) has been observed in *S. ehina*, and the more simple 5-bromo-DMT is found in *S. auria*. These Caribbean sponges solicited attention due to their anti-microbial properties, but it was found that the base extracts in a methanol solution upon reduction, with hydrogen gas and palladium on charcoal, gave pure DMT in a quantitative yield. And in the family of Thorectidae, the sponge *Smenospongia aurea* contains both of these brominated DMT derivatives.

An eerie cross-connection to the phenethylamines exists in the sponges, a connection to mescaline. The N,N-dimethyl homologue of mescaline has been called trichocereine and is an alkaloid found in the cactus *Trichocereus terscheckii*. Two very closely related compounds have

been isolated from species of the Caribbean sponge *Verongida* spp., which are the methonium salts of trichocereine where the two methoxyl groups have been effectively replaced with bromine atoms. The compound 3,5-dibromo-4-methoxy-N,N,N-trimethylphenethylammonium salt, and its O-demethylated counterpart, are marine antibiotics with an uncanny resemblance to active cactus phenethylamines. Searches in the families such as Niphatidae have been unsuccessful, but the Memospongia family (sponges) has an individual *Pachymatisma johnstonii* which contains yet another brominated material, an amino acid 6-bromo hypaphorine. This is a permethylated tryptophan precursor to the compounds mentioned in the biosynthesis section later. This same bromo-quat salt is in an Okinawan sponge of the genus *Aplysina*.

Another marine source of 5-bromo-DMT is an ascidian, specifically the tunicate *Eudistoma fragum*, which is a sea-squirt found in New Caledonia. An interesting tie-in with the ayahuasca world is to be found here with the simultaneous isolation of the identically brominated (b-carboline, woodinine. This is the tetrahydroharman analogue, with a 6-bromo-substitution (that is in the same location as the 5-position in DMT) and an N-methylpyrrolidinyl-2 substituent at the carboline-1 position. It is a simple chemical maneuver to reduce the bromo group off with a little catalytic hydrogenation, but it is a real possibility that 5-Br-DMT might be active on its own account. Almost every other 5-substituted DMT is active. Another tunicate, of the genus *Lissoclinum*, contains 6-bromo-tryptamine.

A small phylum of sea-invertebrates are called bryozoans, and one of these has been reported to contain a brominated tryptamine. The organism *Flustra foliacea* has the N-formamide of 6-Br-NMT, which might also reduce to DMT with catalytic hydrogenation, as with the tunicate compound above.

And finally, there is a marine coral organism, a sea fan known as a Gorgonian, from the Bay of Naples in the Mediterranean, with the binomial name *Paramuricea chamaeleon*, which has been reported to have a number of indolic components present without any bromine at all. DMT is present, as is NMT. NMT is also in the related sea fan *Villagorgia rubra* from New Caledonia.

## THE MAGIC MUSHROOMS (The Families of the Order Agaricales)

There is an immense group within the world of all living things called the fungi. Many people hold this to be a kingdom in its own right, as its components are neither plant nor animal. They are everything else, from molds, to mushrooms, mildew, and bacteria. Probably they are closer to plants than to other things, but they do not have chlorophyll, so they aren't

really plants, either. Some are parasites, growing in or on living stuff, and some are saprophytes that prefer dead matter. I have learned a lot from them about the balance of nature, by observing how they propagate and reproduce, but I have learned a lot more from them about the egocentric nature of man, simply by observing how the many experts in the field (called mycologists) seem to disagree, usually with vigor, as to how fungi should be classified. There are cliques, there are schools, there are societies, there are total philosophies that are convinced that they are completely right, and that all the others are completely wrong.

"This species must be moved to that genus, in yonder family, as noted in my most recent publication in *Applied Mycologia Today*."

"But, Dr. Rasputin, you already have tenure at the University, so let me use this genus for the title of an article in my new journal, *Amanita Northwestica*, and I will make you an Associate Editor. But will you drop your insistence for the renaming of the *Pholiota* group?"

"Yes, but you must allow me at least one race with my name attached to it, or allow me to identify this group as a new subspecies."

"But Dr. Sangfroid would object to that."

"Probably he would, but I hold Dr. Goodheart to be the defining authority." "Oh, really? Come to think of it, I'm not sure I have an editorial opening available at the moment."

In short, classification of these organisms has been a nightmare for many years and will, without doubt, remain a nightmare for many years to come. There is no right way. There is not even a currently accepted way. But I personally like things somewhat organized, even if incorrectly so, so here is a working pattern for the mushrooms that allows the placement of all dimethyltryptamines of interest, largely psilocybin and psilocin. I follow a rubric from high school that allowed me to memorize the Mendelian pattern: "I learned in my CLASS the ORDER of my FAMILY." The class name ends in "-etes," the ordinal name in "-ales," and the family name in "-eae" or perhaps just in "-ae."

Here is where I intend to list the families that contain the magic mushrooms (aka 'shrooms) along with a comment or two, and follow them with the known genera that contain active species. The compounds that are known to contribute to the central activity of these fungi are: psilocybin (4-hydroxy-DMT phosphate ester), psilocin (4-hydroxy-DMT), baeocystin (4-hydroxy-NMT phosphate ester) and norbaeocystin (4-hydroxy-tryptamine phosphate ester). An exhaustive and documented list of all active species is detailed in Jonathan Ott's *Pharmactheon*, pp. 309-319, and need not be repeated here. What follows is not a keying structure to be used in the field, but just a collection of names to be enjoyed or avoided.

**CLASS:**

**Basidiomycetes** (including rusts, smuts, mushrooms, puff balls, everything with spores that are produced in specialized structures called basidia. Two of the most common subclasses are:

**Gasteromycetes** and

**Hymenomycetes** which, in general, tell you where the spores are located. We are following the second subclass.

**ORDER:**

Agaricales, the gilled (agaric) and the tubed (bolete) fungi which we are following here, as opposed to the:

**Aphyllphorales**, the polypores, the chanterelles, and the teeth and crust fungi, the:

**Boletales**, the boletes, now usually grouped in the order Agaricales, the:

**Tremellales** (the jelly fungi), and the:

**Dacrymycetales** (the tuning fork fungi) and the:

**Auriculariales**. These last three are often lumped together.

**FAMILY:**

**Strophariaceae** (the Stropharia family). *Psilocybe*, *Stropharia*

**Coprinaceae** (the Inky Cap Family). *Copelandia*, *Panaeolina*, *Panaeolus* and *Psathyrella*.

**Cortinariaceae** (the Cortinarius family).

*Gymnopilus* (*Pholiota*) and *Inocybe*.

**Pluteaceae** (the Pluteus family, also called the Volvariaceae family). *Pluteus*.

**Bolbitiaceae**, (the Bolbitius family, known for its many LBM's or Little Brown Mushrooms). *Agrocybe*, *Conocybe*.

**Tricholomataceae** (the Tricholoma family). *Gerronema* and *Mycena*.

**Hygrophoraceae** (The Hygrophorus family, or the Waxy Caps). *Hygrocybe*.

That is pretty much the picture of the Magic Mushrooms. All of these contain 4-hydroxy-DMT compounds in various guises, but not one of them contains DMT, which I find to be totally amazing. Two additional families must be mentioned separately, for several reasons. One is:

### **Amanitaceae** (the Amanita family).

The major genus is *Amanita* and some fifteen species have been explored chemically. All contain 5-hydroxy-DMT, or bufotenine. Some (*A. muscaria*, *A. pantherina*) also contain muscimol or ibotenic acid, as well as the cholinergic alkaloid, mescaline. Others (*A. phalloides*) are notorious for the presence of the deadly polypeptide hepatotoxins, phalloidin and amanitin. But again, as with the magic mushrooms, there is no report mentioning the presence of unsubstituted DMT or its 5-methoxy-analogue. The other is:

### **Hypocreaceae** (the Ergot family).

Here the major genus is *Claviceps* which is the Mutterkorn of all the ergoline chemistry that has made both Sandoz and Albert Hofmann famous. Here is the raw material from which LSD and all of its remarkable extensions have come. And yet, there are no suggestions of DMT or any other simple tryptamines being present. And, as an extension of this fungal resource over into the dicotyledonous world of higher plants, there is the morning glory family, the Convolvulaceae, which is a treasure house of ergot-like alkaloids. Many species of *Ipomoea*, *Rivea*, and *Argyreia* are superb sources of ergot alkaloids that can be converted to lysergic acid as a synthetic intermediate, or are psychopharmacological active as lysergamides in their own rights. There is a short, but rich chapter called MGS devoted to just to the seeds of these plants. An extremely rich collection that is, again, devoid of DMT or any of its interesting homologues.

### **FROGS (Family Bufonidae)**

There is a strange, almost surreal parallel between the chemistry of mushrooms (also called toadstools) and the chemistry of frogs (also called toads), when seen through the eyes of a person trying to paint a picture of the nature of plant or animal alkaloids. In fact, some insight can be gotten about the interests and prejudices of the person himself by his choice of names here. Frogs vs. toads. These are often used interchangeably, as both are defined as squat amphibians, without tails, which like to jump about, and have tadpoles. As differences go, frogs have smooth skins and are

lumped into the aquatic world (there are some aquatic toads, however), and toads are warty and are assigned to the terrestrial world. The mushroom/toadstool distinction is just as arbitrary. Both are defined as fungi, usually with an umbrella-shaped cap called a pileus. The name a person chooses to use reflects his taste and opinions. He probably thinks that frogs are Frenchmen and toads are ugly. He feels that mushrooms are edible and toadstools are poisonous. But in truth, these two large groups of individuals are rich in pharmacologically active alkaloids which are closely related, structurally, to DMT. Yet neither frogs nor toads, mushrooms nor toadstools have been shown to contain this title compound.

With the mushrooms, the defining analogues were analogues of DMT which carried an oxygen atom in the 4-position, to provide the truly psychedelic compounds psilocybin and psilocin. Nature didn't show much imagination. There was not much variety, just a well-grounded capability of hydroxylating DMT at the 4-position. With these fungi, there was an occasional venturing into the 5-hydroxylation territory (to provide bufotenine), but interestingly this modification occurred only in those species that had to be left absolutely untouched because of the deadly peptides they contained. But with neither the 4-oxygenation species or the 5-oxygenation species was there any DMT to be found.

With the ergot fungi, nature showed almost too much imagination. From somewhere, a benign God conceived the lysergide ring structure, with a bewildering array of shrubbery on an exposed, vital carboxamide group which led to a treasure trove of natural alkaloids, as well as to a similar collection of synthetic allies. The morning glories provided more versatility, and from all this came LSD and the several variations that are detailed in the second half of this volume. All of these contain, in their structures, the tryptamine skeleton. And, a bit perversely, all of them also contain the phenethylamine skeleton. But none of these natural sources possess DMT.

With frogs, there is a sort of integration of both worlds, the specificity of the enzymatic hydroxylation capability, and the generality of structural imagination. As to positional specificity, it is simple and unambiguous. The frog will hydroxylate DMT at the 5-position rather than at the 4-position of the fungal world. The major alkaloid archetype is 5-hydroxy-DMT itself, bufotenine, and it is found throughout the frog world. *Bufo*, the prefix to bufotenine, is the major genus of frogs and, in fact, comes from the Latin word for toad. Putting a 5-hydroxy group onto a DMT molecule (to provide bufotenine) and in some instances to cap this hydroxy group with a methyl group (to provide 5-MeO-DMT), is, from the chemical viewpoint, the unimaginative part. The excitement is to be found in viewing the incredible wealth of bizarre chemicals that are to be found in the catalogue

of poisons of the many tropical poisonous frogs. Complex alkaloids without precedent, strange, unexpected, with completely wild structures that are largely unrelated to any rational alkaloidal prototype. Most of them have been brought to our awareness by a little-recognized personal hero of mine, John Daly. And yet, even with this bountiful array of interesting compounds, one thing is lacking. There is no hint of DMT.

Thus, this is not the place for a review of the literature. Mushrooms are everywhere, and frogs are everywhere. And DMT is almost everywhere. They just don't happen to be in the same everywhere.

### **GRASSES The Grass Family, Gramineae (Poaceae)**

There are up to a thousand genera of grasses, with probably up to ten thousand species. There are many botanical families, and a lot of these contain plants that most of us would call grasses, but it is more comfortable for me to try to find common names for these groups. There are sedges (family Cyperaceae), bulrushes, and papyrus. There are similar hollow-stemmed rushes (family Juncaceae), and there are the bur reeds and cattails of the family Typhaceae. All of them are simple and ancient plants, but none of them have ever been reported to contain tryptamines.

But with the largest family of the grass-like plants, called Gramineae (sometimes called Poaceae), it is quite a different story. Here we find not only reeds but also the grains and forage foods used by both animal and man. There are soft flexible plants that are easily eaten by sheep and cattle. These are referred to as herbaceous, with leaves and soft tissue and nutritious seeds. There can be hard things like bamboo, reeds, and sugar canes, which are woody and have rigid stems. From these one can make furniture, arrows, spears, and clarinet and oboe reeds. Grasses are the mainstay of our diet, the rice and the corn and the wheat of life. But all of these foods, the hard and the soft, are nonetheless grasses and many of them are exceptionally rich sources of DMT and related tryptamines. Consider a most common name:

— Canary Grass                      (*Phalaris* spp.)

I had a visit from a young ayahuasquero a year or so ago, who brought me a house gift of some liquid expressed from a grass that was presumably rich in DMT. Let me slow down for a minute. Just what, or who is an ayahuascero? He is a person who is knowledgeable in the making and offering of ayahuasca. In the Chapter "Hoasca vs. Ayahuasca" I try to lay out a definition of these two proper names. Both names apply (with appropriate attention paid to origins and professional territory) to a mix-



ture of two things which are designed to interact to produce an active psychotropic drink. One component, usually containing DMT, is immediately inactivated by the body's chemistry if it is taken alone. The other component, usually containing harmine or harmaline, serves to inactivate the body's inactivating defenses, thus allowing the first component to become orally active. The second agent of the combination keeps the body from neutralizing the first. The combination, the inhibited and the inhibitor, is commonly called ayahuasca. The artist/craftsman/sage who can combine these two extracts together to create the material ayahuasca, is known as an ayahuasquero.

So, I had a visit by a young ayahuasquero who wanted to show me examples of ayahuasca that he had prepared. The first of these two components, the DMT-containing component, was an extract of a grass that had the proper name of *Phalaris*. He had gathered a handful of the grass (it apparently grows wild throughout most of the United States) and put it through something called a wheat grass juicer. This is a grinding instrument that can be obtained at the local health food store, and can reduce a pile of plant stuff to a glassful of liquid and some dry discards. The pale green watery liquid that came from this process could be consumed as part #1 of the ayahuasca combination, or it could be dried to a green brittle residue (evaporation of the contained water was achieved by pushing air over it with an electric fan) and smoked. About six tokes did it, or so he claimed.

So here I had a grass that was a DMT source and, according to him, a good one. I wanted to see what I could learn about it by snooping about in my library and doing a little bit of lab work. *Phalaris*. That is the only word I had to operate on. My U.S. government printing office publication (1950) on the grasses of the United States informed me that *Phalaris* is an old Greek name for grass. Fine. It is self-descriptive. However, my Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (which has few botanical aspirations) had another contribution in this area. Phalarope was a sandpiper-like bird named by combining phalaris and pod (according to them, phalaris is a Greek word for coot, and pod is a foot) so we have coot's feet. And coot is apparently a duck-like bird without pretensions. I was not making much headway, unless I wished to pursue haunts of coot and hern.

Everything fell completely apart after my ayahuasquero company had left, and I entered into a fine dialogue with my son, Theo. We tried to construct a botanical (not a classical) definition of *Phalaris*. Here are the first lines of the official definition from the U.S. Department of Agriculture text.

"Spikelets laterally compressed, with (1) terminal perfect floret and (2) sterile lemmas below the rachilla disarticulating above the glumes, the usual inconspicuous sterile

lemmas falling closely appressed to the fertile floret; glumes equal, boat shaped, often winged on the keel, sterile lemmas reduced to two small, usually minute, scales (rarely only one); fertile lemma coriaceous, shorter than the glumes, enclosing the faintly two-nerved palea."

We were doubled over in laughter. In the more advanced parts of First World countries there is a professional business phenomena known as the phone tree in which you will be presented with six choices following your initial inquiry, and each of these will, in turn, give you six additional directions to follow. In this *Phalaris* definition we have six words, each totally unknown, and each a part of the exclusive jargon of the botanists. Each one, when looked up, gave rise to new cascade of unknown words.

Glume: a chaffy bract. Chaff I know to be the dusty stuff that goes Southwards when you toss threshed wheat into the air with a North wind blowing. A bract I have always known as the brightly colored inside first leaf of the bougainvillea that is usually assumed, by most viewers, to be the blossom. And bracts comprise the bright red display of the Christmas poinsettia.

Lemma: the lower of the two bracts enclosing the flower of the spikelet of grasses.

Spikelet: one of the small few-flowered bracted spikes that make up the compound inflorescence of a grass or sedge.

I found myself becoming quite uncertain as to what even a grass was. The second of the two botanical words I ever learned as a precocious child was monocotyledon, a plant that first sprouts from the ground as a single-spiked, pointy thing.

This *Phalaris* is a foot-or-so high, a blooming grass, that likes a wet environment, and has an upside-down thimbly-shaped blossom that makes it stand out from other grasses. To use it you cut its tops, and leave the roots alone. So it is a regenerating crop.

The common name for the entire collection of these grasses is Canary Grass. I think I have discovered why. There is a commercial product called Canary Seed, a common food product for caged birds, that has for many years come from a plant that is known as Canary Island Grass, which is *P. canariensis*. This plant is an annual grass that had its origins in the Mediterranean area, largely through Southern Europe, and it has been raised both as bird seed and as a cereal. It was introduced years ago into the United States and is now to be found everywhere here. I have yet to find a report of any analysis of this archetypal Canary Grass showing DMT to be present in it, but I am not sure that anyone has ever looked there. However, its relatives warrant very close inspection as they are extremely rich sources

of DMT, and each deserves to *be* highlighted.

- Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)  
(*Phalaris aquatica*)
- Staggers Grass (*Phalaris tuberosa*)

The Reed Canary Grass (*P. arundinacea*) is a perennial grass. It is best known by its British origins as a reed grass that grows on the banks of British rivers and lakes. As an ornamental, it has often been called ribbon grass. A variety of it is widely scattered through the midwest part of the United States, its blades are striped with white, and it has been called Gardener's Garters. Four alkaloids are claimed to be present: DMT and the demethylated NMT, as well as the 5-methoxylated counterparts of both, 5-MeO-DMT and 5-MeO-NMT. But interestingly, there are reports that there is a simple beta-carboline present in this grass as well (2-methyl-1,2,3,4-THbQ. Thus, depending on the amount there, this possible MAO inhibitor just might make the grass orally active. Another grass has the same species name, but is of a different genus. This is *Festuca arundinacea*, or the reed fescue, or alta fescue, and it is said to contain the simplest of the (b-carbolines, bC itself. Its morphology is quite different from that of *Phalaris arundinacea*, so I must accept that it is a different grass.

There are a number of reports of DMT to be found in the literature on *P. aquatica*. I do not know of a common name for this grass. It appears to be a versatile source of alkaloids, containing not only DMT but also the mono-methyl analogue (NMT), and unsubstituted tryptamine as well. A thin layer chromatographic analysis of seedlings has shown the presence of six additional alkaloids, specifically the 5-hydroxy and the 5-methoxy derivatives of each of these three tryptamine alkaloids.

The third, and most controversial member of this genus of grasses, is the physically similar "Staggers Grass." It has been called Harding Grass and Peruvian Wintergrass. This is the plant *P. tuberosa*, which is also a perennial. It appeared in Australia early in this century, and in the United States a couple of decades later. This specific plant is a true bete noire of the agricultural community in that it is directly connected to the "staggers syndrome" in sheep. This is a tragic reality in that sheep will forage on grasses and in some cases undergo extreme muscular disturbance. The grass, "Staggers Grass", contains the three major tryptamines, DMT, bufotenine, and 5-MeO-DMT. It has been believed, and it has been promoted, that these chemicals are responsible for this syndrome. Not so. A direct administration of a major component, 5-MeO-DMT, did indeed seem to duplicate this syndrome, but the embarrassing point is that neither DMT nor 5-MeO-DMT is orally active, and as such should not affect sheep that

take it in their food by grazing. If a drug is only active parenterally, the poisoned animal could not get the potentially active toxin via an oral route. Is there some enzyme discovery to be made here? This "staggers" story is extremely complex and, at the moment, there is no bottom line. Here is a quick overview of the staggers, and the poisons responsible for them, and the implicated plants from the fescues to the rye grasses to even the ergots, and no one knows yet just what is going on.

Pay careful attention. The earliest argument was presented that it was the high DMT level in *P.tuberosa* that caused the staggers in sheep. But as a preparation for what is to come, let me introduce a botanical reality called an endophyte. "Endo" means inside. "Phyte" means a plant. A plant within a plant. I am surprised to learn that there can be a plant of sorts, often a fungus, that can take up residence inside another plant and grow, through its entire life cycle, as an invisible parasite. About a decade ago this concept became widely accepted and appreciated, and this has led to some re-evaluations of the so-called toxic plants.

There is a form of the "staggers" called Fescue Toxicity (or Fescue Foot) in cattle, horses and sheep, which has been said to be caused by the grass called the Tall Fescue (or Reed Fescue). The plant has the name *Festuca arundinacea* and this species name is identical to the above-named *Phalaris* species, but this is not too surprising considering that "arundo" is the Latin word for reed. Inside this grass there is an internal fungus, an endophyte, which is carried (totally invisibly) from the seed stage clear through to the final adult. This organism was initially thought to be *Sphacelia typhina*, the asexual state of *Epichloë typhina*, a fungus known on many grasses and associated with the syndrome "Choke Disease." This fescue endophyte has been found to be sufficiently distinct to deserve a new name, *Acremonium coenophialum*, and the staggers syndrome may be the result of an ergot alkaloid present, ergovaline.

Pay more attention. Another family of grasses that cause animal problems is the rye-grass group. One of these, *Lolium temulentum*, (called darnel), actually has been connected with human intoxication. The toxic properties of yet another rye-grass, *Lolium perenne* (called English ryegrass, which just happens to contain (b-carboline), has been explained by the presence of yet another parasite fungus, *Acremonium loliae*. Darnel is sometimes connected with the tare (the vetch seed), stated in the Parables of the Bible to have been sown by the enemy. But most scholars now believe that this poison weed was in fact a legume, the vetch *Vicia sativa* or *V. hirsuta*. Another grass, called "sleepy grass" which is largely narcotic to horses, is the needle grass *Stipa robusta*, which has been shown to contain lysergamide (ergine). Again there is a very strong reason to suspect that a fungus is present.

Pay yet more attention. A related plant, the vetch, is represented by a number of species of the genus *Cyperus*, which are known to be infested with the *Claviceps* fungi, perhaps the ergot individual called *Balansia cyperi*. These plants have spun their way into the medicine cabinets of several South American tribes for the treatment of postpartum hemorrhaging, as an abortifacient, as a general hemostatic agent, and for modifying the menstrual cycle. Ergots again are the prime candidates.

There is a final intimate marriage between grasses, staggers and the ergots. There is a grass called Dallis grass, that causes "paspalum staggers" and its botanical name is *Paspalum dilatatum*. This contains an infestation of *Claviceps paspali*, which is one of the most productive ergot cultures for the generation of lysergic acid propanolamide, a superb synthetic precursor to LSD.

I truly believe that the motor problem of staggers in sheep and other grazing animals is due to lysergic acid derivative poisoning, rather than tryptamine poisoning. I am totally convinced that DMT plays no role in this agricultural health problem. DMT is in these grasses, but DMT has no role in staggers. The efforts of the Government to breed grasses with low DMT content, to control these problems, has had no positive return. Such efforts will now be continued only for drug control reasons, not to protect grazing livestock. Let's get back to the rich Gramineae family of true grasses again.

There are a number of grasses that, because of their firmness and height, are commonly called reeds or bamboo. The best known genera, and of great interest to the searcher for plant sources of DMT or related tryptamines are:

- |               |                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| — Giant Reed  | ( <i>Arundo donax</i> )           |
| — Common Reed | ( <i>Arundo phragmites</i> )      |
|               | (or <i>Phragmites communis</i> )  |
|               | (or <i>Phragmites australis</i> ) |
| — Bamboo      | ( <i>Phyllostachys</i> spp.)      |

The giant grass *Arundo donax* is a tall, perennial reed of a bamboo-like nature. A number of studies have found this plant to be a rich tryptamine source. Almost all the published reports have located these alkaloids in the flowers or in the roots of the plant. The blossoms have both DMT and the 5-methoxylated N-demethylated analogue, 5-MeO-NMT. The roots are a rhizomal system and they not only contain these active tryptamines, but bufotenine as well. The quaternary methylated salt of DMT is in the flowers, and bufotenidine and the cyclic dehydrobufotenidine are in the roots. Another report puts 5-MeO-DMT in all of the plant's extracts.

The common reed can be found on banks of marshes, lakes, and streams, from the Arctic to the temperate zones. In Mexico it is called, simply, carrizo and it is used for making mats and screens, and nets for carrying things. One carefully studied individual is *Phragmites australis*, which is particularly rich in DMT in the root system, the rhizome. *Arundo phragmites* and *Phragmites communis* are old synonyms for this reed.

One of the earliest memories I have is of a plant called bamboo. It was a slender thing that grew very high, with round and hollow stalks — it always struck me as being unnatural, maybe man-made. To me it was a thick pile of vertical sticks that you did not go through, but which you had to go around. In Palenque, Mexico, I saw these in clutches many feet around, standing dozens of feet high, and always making squeaky sounds at the top as if their growing process was putting out noise. Most of our cultivated bamboos are from the Orient, but they have been transplanted around the world. The major tryptamine present in the bamboo species is serotonin, and of the twenty or more genera introduced to Western agriculture, most remain totally unexplored as to the alkaloids that might be present.

There are chemically less dramatic (but still widely distributed) grasses which are called the foraging grasses, or reed grasses. The list below includes these, as well as the grains we eat, which are further extensions of the grasses.

— Reed Grass	( <i>Calamagrostis</i> spp.)
	( <i>Arundinella hirta</i> )
— Cogon Grass	( <i>Imperata cylindrica</i> )
— Reed Fescue	( <i>Festuca arundinacea</i> )
— Wild Rice	( <i>Zizania cacuciflora</i> )
— Rice	( <i>Oryza sativa</i> )
— Indian Corn	( <i>Zea mays</i> )
— Barley	( <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> )
— Oats	( <i>Avena sativa</i> )

The various reed grasses, *Calamagrostis* spp., are just a little disappointing in that they contain mainly serotonin, as does the related *Arundinella hirta* and the Cogon Grass *Imperata cylindrica*. The reed fescue, *Festuca arundinacea*, which had been mentioned earlier, contains melatonin. Serotonin is an important neurotransmitter, and melatonin is a neutral compound that plays a role in the night and day functioning of the pineal gland. Neither of these is psychoactive. There is no pharmacological drama here; they are strictly the tryptamine building blocks of the simple alkaloids.

As for the grains, wild rice, *Zizania* spp., is a food source and contains serotonin. The common rice, *Oryza sativa*, is a rich source of melatonin, the sleep hormone. Melatonin is also in the seed-kernel of ordinary corn, *Zea mays*, along with a number of other N-substituted tryptamine amides which have not, to my knowledge, been explored as psychoactive chemicals.

The well-known cultivated barley, *Hordeum vulgare*, is the only agriculturally acceptable member of this lineage. The lesser varieties are considered weeds, especially the fox tail barley, *H. jubatum*, which has sharp-pointed spikes that can pierce the nose and mouth of foraging stock. But again, melatonin is present in the grain seed and the leaf also.

## LEGUMES The Pea Family, Leguminosae (Fabaceae)

The legumes constitute probably the third largest family of plants, with upwards of a thousand genera, and over 10,000 species. The more exacting classifiers insist on a small cluster of sub-families which some botanists claim are families unto themselves, but for this chapter, the only family discussed will be the Leguminosae. I had always thought of legumes as things like peas and beans that have funny root nodules with some bacteria in them, that can take atmospheric nitrogen and convert it to a chemical fertilizer form that is given to the soil and has the potential for enriching it. Nitrogen fixing, it is called. The legumes are also herbs and shrubs and trees. And they are one of the richest sources of tryptamines such as DMT. Some of the genera within the Leguminosae have many fascinating species, and some are monotypic, one of a kind.

One of the most bountiful of these, as far as tryptamine content is concerned, is the genus *Acacia*. Although many types of acacia can be found natively all around the world, there is one country that for over a hundred years has had an intimate identification with them. This is Australia, where there are more than 700 native species, and the common name for them is Wattle (which comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning "flexible twig" as in the term, "wattle and daub").

Here I will digress for a moment into a bit of "Down-Under" history. Initially, the interest was a commercial one, as the bark of the Golden Wattle (*A. pycnantha*) and the Black Wattle (*A. mearnsii*) contained almost 50% tannin. The closely related acacia (the Green Wattle, *A. decurrens*) was transplanted to large plantations in South Africa and, since these could be operated much more economically, the Australian industry pretty much disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century. But the fascination with the plant itself remained. The first Wattle Club was formed in 1899, and in 1910 the first national Wattle day was celebrated in Sydney,

Adelaide and Melbourne on September 1. Songs and poems were written, and sprigs of Wattle were worn on lapels. The movement grew like topsy. It was used for fund-raising for charities and for public morale connected with the World War I war efforts. There were Wattle queens elected and crowned, Wattle Day badges were worn, and every one pinned on a small sprig of it to wear to school. On the first of September, 1988, at a ceremony in Canberra, the Golden Wattle was officially proclaimed Australia's national floral emblem, exactly 75 years after the idea had been first proposed. Just recently I had the pleasure of being in Sydney, and heard from my Sydneysider host a nursery rhyme he had learned as a child:

Here is the Wattle.  
The emblem of our land.  
You can stick it in a bottle  
Or hold it in your hand.

I don't remember any botanical poems from my childhood days in Berkeley, but I do remember that every spring there would be a burst of yellow trees on the hillsides all around us. The acacias were in bloom. In my naive innocence, the large, fluffy yellow blossom was the total definition of this plant, but I have now learned that there are many acacias and some of them look very different from these that I am familiar with. Some produce crops of economic importance such as Gum Arabic, and most of them are total dweebs, but there are surprises.

A couple of years ago I stopped alongside the Claremont Hotel on Fish Ranch Road in Berkeley and snagged a clutch of acacia leaf. I ground it up under some dichlor, filtered it, and evaporated the extract down to a smudge which I dissolved in a couple of drops of toluene/butanol. I shot a microliter of this solution into the GCMS looking for DMT. No DMT. I figured that our local acacia (*A. baileyana*, which is called the Cootamundra Wattle in its native Australia) was simply a Bay Area dweeb. But I shortly thereafter uncovered a surprising bit of information and learned a couple of lessons: (1), read the literature, and (2), nature is not simple.

Pursuing this plant in the botanical writings I discovered a paper written by a close friend of mine, published some twenty years earlier, who had performed and reported some careful work in contrast to my slap-dash one-shot deal. He selected one specific *A. baileyana* tree near his home, and took samples of its leaves in the spring, in the summer, and again in the fall. He carefully assayed these collections separately. The spring selection showed the 0.02% alkaloid content to be a mixture of tryptamine (not DMT but the parent, unsubstituted tryptamine) and b-carbolines, with tetrahydroharman being by far the major component. In the fall, this



alkaloid fraction was exclusively tryptamine. The summer collection was devoid of any alkaloids whatsoever. If the botanist were to have made a single study of this plant, he would have missed the seasonal variation, and have come to a misleading conclusion as to its contents. And how many reports in the literature are based upon a single collection from a group of plants without the time of year even being recorded? Or perhaps even the time of day? If a psychonaut were to have made a single study of this plant, to have discovered activity he might have had to eat it in the spring, smoke it in the fall, and he would have found no activity in the summer months. But he may have tried it a single time, and might not have remembered just when this trial occurred, just as I cannot remember what time of year it was that I collected my own sample of acacia.

There are some pretty macho reports about a few of the other species. I have heard several interesting stories of experiences with the Australian Wattle tree, *Acacia maidenii*, or Maiden's Acacia. Early reports of DMT and NMT being components of the stem bark have been pharmacologically confirmed by a report made by some Sydney explorers who leached its bark with boiling methanol and, after evaporating the solvent, smoked the residue to successfully generate a dramatic DMT trip. There are quite a large number of other *Acacia* species that are well documented as containing methylated tryptamines, but few if any have histories of cultural use despite the presence of these compounds. There is DMT (or NMT, or T) reported in the following *Acacia* species: *A. albida* (DMT, in the leaf), *A. confusa* (DMT and NMT, in the leaf, stem and bark), *A. cultriformis* or Golden Glow or Knife-leaf Wattle (T, in the leaf and stem), *A. laeta* (DMT, in the leaf), *A. mellifera* (DMT, in the leaf), *A. nilotica* (DMT, in the leaf), *A. phlebophylla* or Buffalo Sallow Wattle (DMT, in the leaf), *A. podalyriaefolia* or Mt. Morgan's Wattle, or Queensland Silver Wattle (T, in the leaf), *A. polyacantha* (DMT, in the leaf), *A. senegal* (DMT, in the leaf), *A. seyal* (DMT, in the leaf), *A. sieberiana* (DMT, in the leaf), *A. simplicifolia* (DMT and NMT, in the leaf, stem and trunk bark), and *A. vestita* or Hairy Wattle (T, in the leaf and stem). *Acacia niopo* is an old name for the plant *Anadenanthera peregrina*, which is mentioned below.

There are two additional *Acacia* and Sydney comments, which must be offered here. The first is an Australian story. One of the early botanists exploring and identifying the many acacia trees discovered a new species, which he described and named. As is often the case, he gave it his name, which was Watts, and the plant is called *A. wattsiiana*, and its common name is the rather remarkable Watts' Wattle. If this information were to become widely known down under, there in Sydney, one might hear a morning greeting between botanists at the University, "G'dye, myte; Watts' wattle!"

The second is an *Acacia* story. It deals with the acacias that are found in, and identified with, the ancient history of the Near East and Egypt. There was a balsam oil peddled to the priests of yore by the Bedouins, which was claimed to have come from the "original" "Tree of Knowledge," which existed at the lowest point on earth, near the Dead Sea and the Sinai Desert. This balsam oil was made from the *A. tortilis*, or the Umbrella Acacia.

There are three genera that are closely associated with the *Acacia* and with each other, and sometimes botanists exchange their genus names but they usually keep, thankfully, the species names intact. This is a sensible convention that has saved the amateur botanist much grief. Two of these related genera are named *Piptadenia* (originally *Niopa*) of which a number of species have slipped over into the second-named genus, *Anadenanthera*. The third genus is *Mimosa*.

One of the major legumes of interest in this nomenclature zoo is the plant *Piptadenia peregrina* (originally *Acacia niopo* or *Mimosa peregrina*), which is now generally known as *Anadenanthera peregrina*. Probably the earliest known active drug forms in the New World were the snuffs of the Amazon (known generically as paricá) and the West Indies (where the name cohoba was used). The snuff from the *A. peregrina* tree was called yopo, and it was made from the seed material from the tree's pods. These seeds of the Yopo Tree were moistened, fermented, mixed with lime (from snail shells), dried and finely powdered. This snuff apparently was used throughout the Northwestern part of South America, in Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, perhaps northern Argentina and certainly Brazil. There are a lot of conflicting data as to the addition of other plants into the yopo; certainly tobacco and virola resin were used. This latter material is the stuff of a snuff in its own right.

Here is a pristine example of the unresolvable conflict that I mentioned at the start of this chapter, the filing of complex things under simple headings. Do you focus on the drug concoction that is used, or its plant origins, as a means of organization? A given snuff may be associated with several plants; a given plant may be associated with several snuffs. I have chosen the plant and its components, and here we are discussing *Anadenanthera peregrina*. This plant is a Pandora's box of tryptamines, and they are to be found in every part of the plant. Bufotenine was the first alkaloid isolated from the seeds (over 40 years ago) and this was followed shortly by the discovery of a host of related alkaloids. Not only the seeds, but the leaf, the bark and the root, all contain DMT, NMT, tryptamine, bufotenine, as well as the two methoxylated analogues, 5-MeO-DMT and 5-MeO-NMT. There are even a couple of b-carbolines present. Several publications have described these analyses, and some of them give a

quantitative measure of alkaloid content.

Other *Piptadenia* spp. are less well known, and less well studied. *Piptadenia macrocarpa* contains not only DMT, but bufotenine and its N-oxide as well in its seeds and pods. Further, the bark contains 5-MeO-NMT. *Piptadenia excelsa* also contains DMT, bufotenine and its N-oxide. Three species (*P. communis*, *contorta*, and *falcata*) contain bufotenine in their seeds. None of these plants have been explored as to their psychoactive potential.

A tree closely related to the *Piptadenia peregrina* (*Anadenanthera peregrina*) is the *A. columbrina* which is native to Peru, Bolivia, Southern Brazil and Northern Argentina. There are various local names for the snuffs from these trees such as vilca, huilca and cebil. The early studies on this particular species report many of the alkaloids that are present in *A. peregrina*, including DMT.

The third genus that is a close cousin to the *Acacia* is *Mimosa*. The Jurema Tree, known botanically as *M. hostilis*, has been used for centuries in northeastern Brazil as the source of an intoxicating drink, Vinho de Jurema. In early anthropological explorations, this plant was accepted as a narcotic plant, and called jurema preta in popular language, but some felt that it was a bush and others, a tall tree. Names such as *Acacia jurema* and *Juremaprêta* were assigned to several candidates, but it was eventually determined that there were basically two kinds of jurema which were *M. nigra* and *M. hostilis*. The drink is made from the root of *M. hostilis* by boiling it a long time in water. The alkaloid that was found to be present, and accepted as the responsible intoxicating agent, was named nigerine and later identified as DMT. Since DMT is, by itself, not orally active, there is something unacceptable with this picture as it now stands; something is wrong. At least one of these statements must be changed: (1) *M. hostilis* is the single source of the orally active intoxicating drink Vihno de Jurema. (2) The plant that was used for the isolation of the alkaloid nigerine is *M. hostilis*. (3) This alkaloid is the sole active component in the drink. (4) Nigerine is DMT. It would be a fascinating project to look for accompanying minor alkaloids, or other clue indicators of origin, that might facilitate the connecting of the origins of this intoxicating drink to the jurema prêta, if it is still being used somewhere in Brazil.

There are several additional species of *Mimosa* that have been found to contain DMT. Another wine has been made from a plant called jurema branca which has been identified as *M. verrucosa*. It has a bark containing reasonably high quantities of DMT. Three closely allied plants contain alkaloids, but are not known as sources of drugs. *M. scabrella* has been reported to contain DMT and NMT as well as unsubstituted tryptamine itself. An even wider selection can be found in *M. somnians* where all of

these are present plus bufotenine, 5-MeO-DMT and 5-MeO-NMT as well. And finally, traces of DMT have been reported from the trunk bark of *M. tenuiflora*.

There are a total of nine additional legumes that have been reported as containing DMT and other tryptamines. None of these, with one extraordinary exception, have shown a particularly high alkaloid content, and none have become popular as drug sources. Four species of the genus *Desmodium* demonstrate clear cases for their tryptamine content, in that all have DMT as a major component, all show examples of N-oxides of the more common alkaloids, and most of them contain pretty rich collections of tryptamine bases in general. *Desmodium gangeticum* is the classic model, with DMT and 5-MeO-DMT and their two N-oxides as the defining components of the leaf, the stem, and the root. *Desmodium pulchellum* has the same inventory, but with 5-MeO-NMT and bufotenine present in addition. *Desmodium triflorum* has all of the above, but some nor-bufotenine and bufotenine N-oxide as well. The roots of *D. caudatum*, on the other hand, simply contain DMT and bufotenine N-oxide. *Lespedeza bicolor* is a plant that has been studied as a uterine contractant. Its leaves and root bark contain a reasonable variety of tryptamines, however, including DMT and 5-MeO-DMT (and their N-oxides), and bufotenine. Another indolic alkaloid, lespedamine, is also present. The Indian plant *Mucuna pruriens* has the same inventory (DMT, 5-MeO-DMT and their N-oxides) and bufotenine in both the leaf and the fruit. *Petalostylis labicheoides* contains DMT and NMT in leaf and stem and, interestingly, also melatonin.

One very interesting plant is the Illinois Bundleflower, *Desmanthus illinoensis*. Its roots are a treasure house of tryptamines. As a DMT source, the entire root contains 2% by weight, and the actual root bark itself contains a whopping 25%. NMT is present in these tissues at 0.5% and 8% respectively. But there are other tantalizing goodies there. Both N-hydroxy-NMT and 2-hydroxy-NMT are present. Both are pharmacological unknowns, but it is interesting that N-hydroxy-NMT bears the same relationship to NMT that N-hydroxy-MDMA does to MDMA. And, since N-HO-MDMA is equipotent to MDMA, perhaps N-HO-NMT would be equipotent to NMT. But then, the human activity of NMT has not yet been confirmed.

One last legume problem remains, and I am not sure just how to deal with it. There are three more genera of the legumes that deserve special mention. None of them contain species that are sources of DMT, but they either contain tryptamine-like alkaloids or they are almost physically indistinguishable from their cousins that do, and all of them are very toxic and also have some passing reputation for producing a sort of psychotropic intoxication that is not well understood. This story involves the mescal bean history of the early Indian population of the United States and Mexico.

There have been red beans deeply involved in some ritual ceremonies throughout these areas for centuries, and they may well have been a prelude to the Peyote cultures which are now well established. As I explained to my dear step-daughter Wendy, there are reference books and photo-spreads and poison-plant manuals and ethnopharmacology theses, all referring to beans that are all red, to red things that are really brown, to the red things with black dots on them somewhere, to the red and black mixed half-and-half things, to simply the red beans found in the native marketplaces, all of which are part of the ceremonial and toxicological history of our early indigenous population. I told Wendy that all I really wanted to do was to steal from somewhere a paragraph that presents all of this complexity in simple language. I have looked quite widely, and I don't think that paragraph exists, so I have to write it myself. Here it is, an attempt to verify the botanical identity of the red beans reputed to have been used in Southwest Indian ceremonies for centuries. There are sections called "Probably Yes" and "Probably No," to be followed by an additional paragraph with other beans including teasers from Chiapas and from Australia entitled, "Most Certainly Not."

The "Probably Yes" deals with the story behind the Mescal Bean culture that existed for years in the Southwest United States and the Northern Sonora and Chihuahua desert of Mexico. Mescal is a tricky word with many connotations, and is often seen in Spanish as mezcal. It has been used for the strong distilled alcoholic drink made from the Century Plant or Maguey, known botanically as being of the genus *Agave*. One specific mescal drink, known as tequila, is made specifically from the species *A. tequilana*. It is a name that had been used mistakenly by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to identify the peyote cactus, *Lophophora williamsii*, and has contributed to the naming of its primary alkaloid as mescaline. The dried top of the cactus has been called a Mescal Button.

But the term "Mescal Bean" refers to the seed of the plant *Sophora secundiflora*, known popularly as the Texas Mountain Laurel or simply Wild Laurel. Its lavender blossoms are dramatic against the barren Southern Texas desert, and they themselves contain some of the alkaloids of the seeds and, if eaten, can make a person ill. It is the seeds themselves, the red beans, that are best known. They are called frijolillo, or frijolito, or frijol-rojo, or simply colorines. They are small, measuring 10 to 12 millimeters in length and from 8 to 10 millimeters in diameter. They are scarlet-colored, and have a centuries-old history of use in Indian culture, in a tradition known as the Deer Dance, or the Red Bean Dance. These seeds have an ancient reputation for being psychedelic, but they must be consumed with care, as there is a fine line between intoxication and poisoning. The alkaloid composition is complex, closely related to the piperidines and pyridinols rather than to the

tryptamines, and can be located under the class name, cytisine.

The "Probably No" entry deals with two species of legumes known as *Erythrina*, widely recognized in folk medicine. They have seeds which are very easily confused with the *Sophora* seeds, and have been actually sold together, intermixed, in some native markets, as mescal beans, red beans, coral beans, and under the catch-all term, colorines. Here the alkaloid overlap with the tryptamines becomes quite strange. The class of alkaloids that are usually associated with the *Erythrina* collection are four ring systems, with a defining nucleus of a tetrahydro-isoquinoline. This latter unit is associated with the cactus alkaloids, and is the topic of an appendix to this book. There is a tryptamine connection, however, in that almost twenty species have been reported to contain hypaphorine, (N,N,N-trimethyltryptophan) in their seeds. This is the methyl quaternary salt of N,N-dimethyltryptophan, also known by the trivial names, lenticine and glyyunnanenine. This is a precursor to all sorts of potential tryptamine alkaloids discussed later under the section in this chapter called biosynthesis. Of the two species I have in my collection, the seeds of *Erythrina flabelliformis* are most similar to those of *Sophora secundiflora*. They are also red in color, slightly larger ratio of length to diameter, therefore appearing less spherical. Furthermore, they have a dark hilum (this is the navel-like spot where the seed is attached to the pod that sheaths it), whereas that of the mescal bean is cream colored. The other species of *Erythrina* I have is *E. herbocea*. These beans are again bright red, and have cream-colored hila, but they are quite a bit smaller, 6-12 millimeters in length, by average only half that dimension in diameter. I have one additional set of *E. spp.* (I do not know the species) which has the same general dimensions, but with a coal-black hilum.

The "Most Certainly Not" listing deals with the little red seeds that have a black spot at the base that covers more of the surface of the seed than just the hilum itself. The best-studied member of this legume group has been called the Weather Plant, the Rosary Pea, or Indian or Wild Licorice, or simply the Jequirity plant. Its seeds have been called crab's eyes, rosary beans, or prayer or jumble beads. They have been used widely as necklaces in the Southwest and the corresponding seeds, in India, have been used as weight standards, with the name Rati. The plant has the binomial *Abrus precatorius*.

Two of the three interesting drugs derived from the seeds of this plant have similar names, although they have totally dissimilar chemistry. Abrin, also called toxalbumin, is an extremely toxic protein fraction, which can kill a mouse at a total dose of about 1 microgram. It has been said that one seed, well chewed, can be fatal to man. The second drug is abrine, which is N-methyl tryptophan, and a potential source (after decarboxylation) of

NMT. The third drug is, again, hypaphorine, the trimethyl quaternary salt of tryptophan. It is plentiful in the seeds, but there is a claim that the root of this plant contains as much as 7% of this tryptamine precursor.

There is more in this "Most Certainly Not" category. These are red beans that just might be confused with any of the above, but which cannot be in any way considered part of the Southwest United States or Northern Mexican cultures. They are here just because they are fun, and they deal with Indian cultures in their own way. While interacting with the Lacandon Indians in the Palenque Ruins last year, my wife bought a few necklaces that were strings of red Leguminosae beads. These were quite large beads, red and black (largely red), with a wandering line that separated the two colors. I asked my German botanist ally if he could give names to the plant, and I was informed that there were male and female names. The first of these are bright red in color, ellipsoid, fully a centimeter long, with a splash of black color on one edge that covers almost half the bean. The Lacandon name is, "äh äm u tooni" which is a huge legume tree assigned a male role, but which is unidentified! Yet I have also found a photograph in Emboden's "Narcotic Plants" that shows what appear to be these very seeds from a tree with the name *Rhynchosia pyramidalis*, and somewhat larger samples from the so-called necklace tree, *Ormosia monosperma*. I am totally befuddled. The Mexican seed used is bright red, almost circular, about a centimeter in diameter, and about 5 millimeters thick, and there is no black on it at all, but maybe a slight discoloration at the hilum. The Lacandon name is: "äh äm u ch'up" which is another closely-related gigantic legume tree, assigned the female role, but also unidentified! An interesting but different seed used in their necklaces is a small, black, spherical seed of about 5 millimeters in diameter, with no red on it at all. The Lacandon name is: "äh ch'änk'ala" and it has the binomial of *Canna indica*.

Back to the DMT world. The heart of this section is the *Virola* plants, with the resins obtained from their bark, and with the snuffs that have been made from them. As to the plants, there are three that are well known and the most thoroughly studied; *Virola calophylla*, *V. rufula*, and *V. theiodora*. As to the plant parts that contribute to the drug, there is a blood-red resin that needs to be gotten one way or another from its bark. The bark can be taken from felled trees and, on being heated, will exude the red resin which on boiling down provides an amber-like solid, which on grinding becomes the snuff. Or, the inner surface of the bark can be scraped into shavings that can either be roasted and pulverized to form the snuff, or boiled with water, strained, and reduced to a sludge which is dried in the sun and then ground up to form the snuff. Some recipes call for the addition of plants outside of the *Virola* group.

What is it called? The snuff itself goes by many names, depending

on the locale of its use. The names paricá, epená (ebene) and nyakwana are heard in Brazil; yakee and yato are more common in Colombia.

How is it used? In some cultures, the use of the snuff is restricted to the tribal elders, and the witch-doctors, to help in the diagnosis and treatment of their patients. In others, its use is quite general and serves a social role in entertainment or in special ceremonies. It is, however, generally restricted to the post-adolescent male population. Two additional routes of using the *Virola* snuff must be seriously considered, as both are pharmacologically reasonable. Some anthropological field notes have suggested that the dried inner bark might have been smoked, and DMT is well established as being active by this route. Also, some of the claims of oral activity of the snuff may be explained by the reports of the presence of methoxylated beta-carbolines in several of the species. The carboline chemical family contains a number of effective monoamine oxidase inhibitors which would allow the orally inactive tryptamines to show activity when taken by mouth.

The most thoroughly studied *Virola* plant is *V. theiodora* from the Brazilian Amazon. Its bark can run as high as 0.25% DMT by dry weight, and the flowers can be twice this level. 5-MeO-DMT is also present at sizable levels, and both of the mono-methyl homologues, NMT and 5-MeO-NMT, have been found in various parts of the plant. The bark is also a source of the carboline 6-methoxy-2-methyl-1,2,3,4-tetrahydrocarboline.

This exact same tryptamine content is present in the leaf, bark, and root of *Virola rufula* and, except for 5-MeO-NMT, in the bark and leaf of *V. calophylla*. The five remaining *Virola* species that have been studied contain just DMT and 5-MeO-DMT in their leaf and bark (and root bark), and usually at levels too low for any serious consideration as a practical source of DMT. These are *V. elongata*, *V. loretensis* (= *multinervia*), *V. pavonis*, *V. peruviana*, and *V. venosa*. A rather complex assortment of alkaloidal components have been reported in *V. sebifera*. DMT, NMT and 5-MeO-DMT are present, but so is the N-oxide of DMT and of 5-HO-DMT (bufotenine). However, two unexpected amides are reported as being in this plant, the N-formyl and the N-acetyl derivatives of NMT. These are probably not psychoactive, but their resemblance to melatonin is intriguing.

Final comments with the Myristicaceae. Two *Virola* species (*V. calophylloidea* and *V. cuspidata*) have been reported as having positive color tests for alkaloids, but they have apparently never been analyzed. Also, there are two relatively unknown stragglers of academic interest in the tryptamine world. There is a Malaysian tree *Horsfieldia supurba* with 5-MeO-DMT reported in the leaves. Also, there is a paper that discusses another *Myristica* relative, *Osteophloun platyspermum*, which contains abrine methyl ester, discussed later under biosynthesis.



## COFFEE, TEA, QUININE and PSYCHOTRIA The Madder Family, Rubiaceae

I know that the world's coffee supply comes from the seeds of the plant *Coffea arabica*, *C. canephora* and *C. liberica* and the world's tea supply comes from the leaves of *Camellia sinensis*. These two drinks account for over 95% of the brewed caffeine drinks consumed in the world, and the bulk of the remainder is met by the seeds of the guarana plant *Paullinia cupana* and the yerba maté leaves of *Ilex paraguariensis*. There are four psychoactive drugs that are head and shoulders above all others, in that they can claim over a billion users each. Caffeine is one of them. Most people can guess that the second and third are alcohol and nicotine (from *Nicotiana tabacum* and *N. rustica*). But few would guess that the fourth was Betel nut. The nut itself is from *Areca catechu* with the active component arecoline, and the Betel leaf that is chewed with it is from the pepper, *Piper betle*. Amazingly, marijuana is way down there with cocaine and opium as runners-up. Quinine is mentioned here only because it is a standard diluent of heroin on the U.S. East Coast. This is due to the belief that pure heroin is bitter, and with the addition of quinine the diluted heroin is indeed bitter, thus taken as authentic. In the West, the mythology says that really pure heroin will numb the tongue, so there is the addition of benzocaine to the pile of sugar that surrounds heroin, that way it will pass the Western field test.

The only DMT-containing plants in this family are of the genus *Psychotria*. I find it totally amazing that the plant *Psychotria viridis*, whose leaves are an essential component of the two-part sacrament ayahuasca, was neither recognized nor described by botanists until only a few years ago. This is truly 50% of the ayahuasca world. Here is one of the most widely used plants in two of the accepted religions of Brazil, a rich and available source of DMT (and NMT and a little N-methyl-1,2,3,4-tetrahydro-b-carboline), and yet it had never been used for any of the snuff preparations. It has only been used in mixtures, never alone. There are many closely-related species of *Psychotria* that have been found and described in the Brazilian flora, and this would be a rich area for exploring the extent of alkaloid distribution. A quiet dream of mine is to get together a small but compatible team of curious scientists of several disciplines, equip a flat-bottomed barge with a pile of instruments, a good library, an OK kitchen and wine-cellar (if one could put one on a flat-bottomed barge), but no telephone or radio. Then, commit a year to wandering up the Amazon into the boondocks, just collecting and analyzing and recording for posterity. So many noble people are trying to stop the destructive trashing of the Amazon heritage through legal arguments, or with financial maneuvers, or by the restriction of the selling of chain-saws or matches. An innocent boat would

be a totally different approach to the saving of the rain-forest.

The coryanthine and yohimbine alkaloids from the plant *Corynanthe johimbe*, and the mitragynine alkaloids of the *Mitragyna speciosa* are gathered here under this family name. Both of these have revealed compounds of central activity, which have been ignored. Their extracts are just now appearing as herbal medicines through the health food stores.

## LIMES, LEMONS, AND ANGOSTURA BITTERS: The Citrus Family Rutaceae

Here is a little known family that has everything and truly deserves to be at the forefront of the tryptamine literature. This is the family of many of the rich smells of the spice cabinet, and the oils on the palette of the artist making Screwdrivers and Bloody Marys. There are dozens of plants here that are super sources of both DMT and especially of 5-MeO-DMT. Let me take the DMT sources first, build it up from there with binomials and then with other alkaloids.

The women of Burma use a yellow face paint that is known by the native name, "tanaka." This powder comes from the stems of the tree that is known locally as the elephant-apple or the wood-apple, and botanically as *Limonia acidissima* (or *L. crenulata* or *Hesperethusa crenulata*). It has been found to be a substantial source of both DMT and the acetamide of NMT and, rather interestingly, of a carboline, vis., 2-methyltetrahydro-b-carboline. Both DMT and NMT are present in the leaves of *Zanthoxylum arborescens* and *Z. procerum*, both intimate cousins of the Prickly Ash. But it is the bark and berries of this latter plant (*Z. americanum*) which have the herb lore fame as a circulatory stimulant and for the relief of arthritis and rheumatism. I have heard the name Hercules' Club given this plant. A DMT-rich genus, and yet one I have trouble in really pinning down (called the *Vepris* spp.) is an unusually rich DMT source. There is one report that *Vepris ampody* contains over 0.2% DMT but there are several other species known to have medical use, and they contain alkaloids such as quinolinones and isoquinolines, but there is no further mention of tryptamines.

It is the 5-MeO-DMT that should be more closely identified with the Rutaceae. Many medical uses have evolved over the years with the rue plants of the genus *Evodia* (often spelled *Euodia*, from the Greek word for fragrance) because the teas made from the leaves or blossoms are extremely aromatic. They have a broad tradition from the Philippines, through Southeast Asia, and into China. Several contain alkaloids of the phenethylamine and carboline classes (synephrin and evodiamine) and the fruits and roots of *E. rutacarpa* are known to contain 5-MeO-DMT. The leaves of *Dutailleya oreophila* contain hordenine and 2-methyl-6-methoxy-(b-carboline in addition to 5-MeO-DMT, but the leaves of *D. drupacea* (an

endemic New Caledonian shrub) contain only this latter base, and to the extent of over 0.4%. From a kilo of powdered leaves, there was actually isolated 450 mg of an alkaloid fraction that was 98% 5-MeO-DMT. The bark stem of both plants were rich in quinoline alkaloids, but no tryptamines were detected. A remarkably parallel story can be found with another New Caledonia plant, a one foot high bushy shrub that grows at the higher elevations of Mount Boulinda, known botanically as *Melicope leptococca*. The leaves contain the same spectrum of alkaloids, but 5-MeO-DMT, although present at the 0.2% level, is only 35% of the inventory. One of the other alkaloids in the leaves, however, presents an intriguing parallel to the cathinone story. This is the ketone analogue of 5-MeO-DMT, namely 3-(N,N-dimethylaminoacetyl)-5-methoxyindole. Admittedly, it is there in only a small amount but, pharmacologically, it is a completely unexplored tryptamine. One additional, unexpected occurrence of 5-MeO-DMT is in the leaves of *Pilocarpus organensis*. Perhaps a bit of caution is called for here, in that the closely related plant *P. jaborandi* is the source of the plant product Jaborandi, or Maranham. This contains the potent cholinergic drug Pilocarpine, which is a pretty heavy duty poison.

## **HARMINE and HARMALINE (The Families Malpighiaceae and Zygophyllaceae)**

Here is the other half of the ayahuasca story. And I have offended a number of botanists by calling it the "Bad Pork group." I cannot pronounce either family name easily as I have always had some difficulty with the letter "h" to make something hard that would normally be soft. That, coupled with the fact that these families' names are words I have only read, never heard, makes it easy for me to fool around with them. "Malpiggy" is just sitting there, and "zygo-fill" is not far behind! Just add "yea-see-ee" at the end, and you have it. Actually, the reputation these two families enjoy is in the role they play as activators of the DMT contained in other plants. In the story of the South American ayahuasca, the plant *Banisteriopsis caapi* plays a giant role, just as does the Syrian Rue (*Peganum harmala*) in the Northern Hemisphere. These are the two major contributors to this fascinating drink, and their contributions are due, exclusively, to the (b-carbolines (the harmala alkaloids) that are in them. These serve as the inhibitors of the body's destructive enzymes that would normally keep us from experiencing any oral activity from DMT.

*Banisteriopsis caapi* (of the family Malpighiaceae) is a major source of harmine (telepathine, yageine), harmaline (harmadine) and tetrahydroharmine (leptaflorine). But it also contains a rich collection of other alkaloids, mostly carboline-related. A good rule of nomenclature to use as a guide in these alkaloidal areas is to respect that prefix, "harm." It

means that there is a carbon atom, one carbon atom, attached to the 1-position, hanging down from the bottom of the right-hand ring of a carboline, at least the right-hand ring as the structure is usually drawn. Something in a way similar to the location of Tasmania, which is the island hanging down below the right-hand buttock of Australia, at least in the way that the map of Australia is usually drawn. Thus, in *B. caapi* there are several compounds with that "harm-" prefix, including the methyl ester of harmic acid and its amide, and the acid corresponding to harmaline (harmalinic acid). They all have that single carbon atom. The alkaloids present without that carbon atom on the 1-position usually have names with a "nor" in them which says that atom is not there. With a carbonyl group, one has ketotetrahydronorharmine; with an acetyl group, acetyl norharmine.

Several other species of *Banisteriopsis* have been studied, but mostly from the botanical view as ayahuasca components, rather than from curiosity about chemical composition. An exception is a species of great potential interest, *B. rusbyana*, sometimes called *B. cabrerana* and now commonly known as *Diplopterys cabrerana*. Here one finds, quite unexpectedly, a wealth of tryptamines with DMT leading the list. But there is also NMT present, as well as 5-MeO-DMT and bufotenine. And there is a charming bit of yin-yangness associated with these two quite opposite plants. Just as one finds a little island of yin in the middle of the yang, and vice versa, there is a trace of a carboline (N-methyl-tetrahydro-b-carboline) in the tryptamine fraction from *B. rusbyana* and a trace of 6-methoxy-tryptamine in the carboline fraction from *B. caapi*.

A second major natural source for harmala alkaloids is *Peganum harmala*, or Syrian Rue (of the Family Zygophyllaceae). It contains largely harmine and harmaline, but there are small amounts of many additional alkaloids present (things such as vasicine and related quinazoline compounds) as well as not only serotonin but the 6-hydroxy positional isomer of serotonin, 6-hydroxytryptamine. These have been mentioned in the Hoasca vs. Ayahuasca chapter, and probably do not contribute to the overall action of the plant extract. Certainly the use of Syrian Rue has become extremely popular in the structuring of new and novel combinations popularly known within our own domestic scene as ayahuasca. But, in the ayahuasca preparations used in present day Brazilian religious services, the DMT comes exclusively from *Psychotria viridis* (Rubiaceae) and the harmine/harmaline mixture comes exclusively from *B. caapi*.

## ONE SHOT FAMILIES

What I call one-shot families is a scatter of plants here and there which happen to contain DMT or a close relative, but nothing earth-

shaking. Most of these have come to light, not because of biological activity, but due to a positive alkaloid color test, or as an unexpected bonus during a phytochemical study pursuing something quite unrelated.

The family Acanthaceae contributes a single active plant. Although most of the single plant sources of the South American snuffs have been named under the *Virola* collection above, there is a genus of plants, *Justicia*, that is well established as an active plant in its own right, or as an occasional additive to other plants in ceremonial use. Most members of this genus are herbs and shrubs, but a few are trees. The leaves of the best studied species, the one-foot high *J. pectoralis*, contains all the needed compounds for activity, NMT, DMT and 5-MeO-DMT. However, there are reports that this is used only as a flavoring agent for popular snuffs, so no one really knows, at the moment, the extent that these tryptamines might contribute to the overall activity.

The family Urticaceae is best known as the source of nettles. Several genera in this group have been studied as to their alkaloid content, but most have no tryptamines present other than the ubiquitous serotonin. Apparently *Urtica pilulifera*, the Roman Nettle, contains bufotenine, but none of the plants that were looked at contained DMT or 5-MeO-DMT.

The family Lauraceae contains the laurels and the bays. There is no mention of DMT here, but some of the closely related tryptamines are known to be present. The Brazilian variety, *Nectandra megapotamica* contains NMT largely in the bark, and the Oregon and California West Coast variety (*Umbellularia californica*) contains bufotenine. The several *Persea* spp. that have been looked at contain only serotonin.

The family Chenopodiaceae is composed of the goosefeet and pigweeds. Traces of NMT have been reported in several genera, here, including *Arthrophytum leptocladum*, *A. wakhanicum*, *Girgensohnia dipteris*, *Haloxylon scoparium* and *Hammada leptoclada* but only in very small amounts, not worth pursuing.

In the family Ochnaceae there is a Cameroon tree-shrub known as *Testuleagabonensis* which contains DMT as well as NMT (and its formamide) in the trunk bark. In the family Aizoaceae, DMT and NMT have been reported in some species of the genus *Delosperma*. Similarly, in the family Polygonaceae, there is a report of DMT in a species of *Eriogonum*.

In bringing one of the appendices up to date, I have just stumbled onto another family, Loranthaceae, which contains the parasitic plant, mistletoe. Its berries apparently contain 1-ethyltryptamine, of unknown pharmacology, but a true isomer of DMT with a 1-ethyl rather than an N,N-dimethyl.

I know of no native use of any of these. I am sure that there are small treasures scattered about here and there that I have missed, but in my own searching of the botanical literature, all the remaining families have been

without anything close to DMT.

This has been a broad but brief overview of the ubiquitous nature of a very simple molecule, N,N-dimethyltryptamine, or DMT. It is amongst the smallest and simplest of the chemicals in the tryptamine world and it is, essentially, the "T" in the name of this book, *TIHKAL*. It has played and will certainly continue to play a pivotal role in the philosophy of drug definition and in the continuing dialogue between medicine and the law. For example:

Are "natural" drugs inherently safer or better than synthetic drugs? DMT was first synthesized in the laboratory and remained a "synthetic" drug for a couple of decades until it was identified from a plant source. Then, of course, it became a "natural" drug. Nothing changed except for the positions taken by the advocates on the two sides. A sample from either source, nature or the laboratory, can never be made sufficiently pure to eradicate all the trace tell-tale fingerprints of congeners that will forever define its origins. Yet these trace impurities will never be successfully argued as contributing to the action of the drug itself.

Will the natural sources of DMT eventually be exhausted or effectively removed from availability? Such an outcome is hard to imagine. This chapter alone gathers hundreds of sources of the drug and, by extrapolation, implies that there are hundreds more out there as yet unknown. The discovery process will remain difficult for the ethnopharmacologist as well as the prohibitionist, since the activity of a suspect plant found in the field cannot be quickly determined by tasting a leaf or nibbling a root. The fact that DMT is not orally active demands that some unusual degree of added sophistication must be used in surveying new candidates.

There are the ethnopharmacologists on the internet who are continually exploring and reporting new plant materials. There is an increased awareness of the Brazilian religious use of ayahuasca and the importation of these ideas into the United States and Europe. There is a proliferation of books by articulate authors such as McKenna, De Korne, Ott, Rätsch, Pendell, Stolaroff and many others. There is an open acknowledgment in several European countries of the validity, even the value, of scientific research and personal inquiry into the exploration of one's own consciousness by any of several means including the use of psychedelic drugs. This honest and healthy view will some day take root in the United States. Perhaps this review can provide some useful information.

If there is a role for DMT to play as a neurotransmitter or valid ligand in brain chemistry, will this be easily explored in future research? Not in the United States, in our lifetimes, I fear. Remember that unapproved research with it was prohibited several years before it was discovered to be a possible neurotransmitter, and that restriction has never been lifted. The first step needed would be to abandon the thoughtless compounding of

drug laws and governmental control of medical and scientific research. Several grim stories have been told describing the complications faced in seeking official permission for any research with Schedule I drugs. There are no indicators that these requirements will lessen in the future. Perhaps progress will be made in some of the other Western countries where possession of and research with these chemicals is becoming more accepted. But within the United States, the political rewards derived from the increased demonizing of these chemicals far outweigh any conceived medical rewards that might come from the study of them.

## BIOSYNTHESIS

The conversion of a chemical "A" into another chemical "B" is the art of synthesis, and the person who achieves the conversion is called the chemist. The usual process followed is: the chemist gets "A," then finds a beaker, a stirrer, a flask, a steam bath and a reflux condenser, and boils "A" with this and that for some number of hours, then filters, extracts, concentrates, distills and crystallizes. I have succeeded, the chemist will say, in synthesizing "B" from "A" in the laboratory, in a 67% yield, using standard *in vitro* techniques. That is synthetic chemistry, at least to almost all of the chemists that you meet and talk to at the semi-annual American Chemical Society conference. The only living thing involved in the entire process is the chemist himself, who stands at the lab bench, weighs this and pipettes that, and takes his isolated product down the hall to the pharmacologist or to the patent attorney. The end product "B," the target achieved, has no other association with a living process, in that it was conceived on a cocktail napkin, and its uterus was a glass beaker.

But "A" just might have been converted to "B" by the chemist in quite a different way. What if he had dissolved "A" in a cup of water or packed it into a gelatin capsule, and swallowed it? His body is the beaker and his liver or lungs provide the synthetic capability for the wanted conversion. Then he collects his urine for the next 48 hours, and extracts, concentrates, distills and crystallizes. He has synthesized "B" from "A" in a 67% yield using standard *in vivo* techniques. There were almost no glass (*vitro*) containers used but rather the living body (*vivo*) was the beaker. All the biochemists and pharmacologists at the semi-annual Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics conference in Boston will discuss metabolism, bioconversion and the role of this isozyme and that enzyme promoter. It is still the art of synthesis, but it calls totally upon the living organism.

There are many in-between levels of chemical reaction where one might ask if a living process was indeed being used. This entire chapter is about living systems — fungi, coral, seaweed, grasses, flowers, trees, frogs.

You can learn from nature, you can study a tree to discover its patterns of growth and maturation, and become intimate with it through much patience. This is most certainly *in vivo* synthesis. You get to know the living entity, and choose to join it in its world. But what if one were to use a living individual, or some preparation that had once been a living system, but run the reaction in a non-living glass container? How about the making of wine by growing yeast in a sugar solution? Or the incubation of your starting material "A" with an otherwise discarded umbilical cord from a newborn sheep? What if you isolate the enzyme fraction from the liver of a living rabbit and use it as your chemical reagent? Are these *in vivo* or *in vitro* processes?

I want to close this chapter with three examples of twilight chemistry that are, in essence, illustrations of the imposition of the hand of man onto otherwise natural living systems. They are located somewhere in-between the natural world (in the living organism) and the inanimate laboratory world (in the flask on the steam bath).

Eloquent examples of this are the delightful reports of indole syntheses that were explored in Germany over the last few years. Visualize a vigorous growing mycelium culture that is synthesizing psilocin by bringing together the natural DMT in its diet with a vital but not-too-discriminating enzyme that has the capacity for putting a hydroxyl group onto a tryptamine. The mycelium has the knowledge of how to 4-hydroxylate something, but it doesn't really care what that something is. The available target for this skill, in the natural mushroom, just happens to be DMT. The product is 4-hydroxy-DMT, or psilocin, and this is what the organism makes, because this is all that can be made. There is one starting material, there is one synthetic capability, and there is one product. And this product is what gives importance and substance to the biologically active magic mushrooms, be they grown in the field or in the lab. Now, let's manipulate things a little bit. Let's keep this little fungal factory going, but wash out the DMT and replace it with something like DET. The hydroxylating compulsion appears to be still there and is quite intact. What happens? The mycelium produces a bunch of 4-hydroxy-DET, an interesting compound and an active psychedelic, which was first reported by the Sandoz Laboratories, but a compound that is unknown in nature. I will wager that if the mycelia were to be sprinkled with MIPT, the enzyme system would produce 4-HO-MIPT which is fully as potent as psilocin, and unrecognized in any legal system in any country that I am aware of. You are exploiting a natural process by providing it with an unnatural starting material, and allowing it to generate a product that is intrinsically unnatural. The mushrooms that are produced do not know that they are the vehicles of alien seed.



It has occurred to me that I have touched upon a fascination point of law. Federal law does not specify any mushrooms as being illegal. It is only the components of mushrooms, i.e., psilocin and psilocybin, that are explicitly specified in the statutes. There are only four plants named in the law itself, although two more have sneaked in by the dirty trick route. In the 1970 Controlled Substances Act these four plants are Peyote, Marijuana, Opium and Coca. Both *Tabernanthe iboga* and *Catha edulis* became listed through administrative maneuvering, and neither inclusion has been legally challenged. But mushrooms? *Psilocybe* spp. are not recorded anywhere in the law. They are not illegal. If they are things that contain illegal drugs (and indeed psilocin and psilocybin are named as Schedule I drugs) then they are the package in which these chemicals are transported or made available. But think for a moment. If a mushroom of a naughty genus had only non-scheduled indoles present in it, why could you not possess it with total immunity? The Controlled Substance Analogue Bill of 1986 might be an added hurdle, but the prosecutor would have to prove that there had been the production there of a chemical that you knew to be substantially similar, in action, to psilocin. And, for this synthetic act to constitute a criminal act, the product would have to be intended to be used in man. What an interesting argument of innocence. Perhaps they (the Suits) will quote this book? If they do, you can always argue that this book is a work of fiction.

Consider a second example in this in vivo/in vitro dialogue. One of my early mentors was a Professor of Medicinal Chemistry in San Francisco, who had spent some post-graduate time in Italy in the laboratory of a Professor of Microbiology. He was learning the process of making and using culture media for the growing of fungal clones. One of his discoveries was that there were unusual species within the Ergot world that could be easily grown in small broth vats. One of these was, as I remember, the ergot line called *Claviceps paspali*. A liter of sterile medium, inoculated with a clean probe of this organism, would produce hundreds of milligrams of the propanolamide of lysergic acid. As I remember (it has been a few decades) the boiling of this alkaloid in toluene would split off the aminoalcohol and produce lysergic acid which could be converted, with appropriate care, to a few hundreds of milligrams of LSD. My God. A quart of goop giving rise to a few tens of thousand doses of acid? My friend was not aware of this possibility, neither then nor even today, but it does indicate that access to foreign ergotamine tartrate is not an essential preliminary to illegal drug synthesis.

Yet another example. Virtually all the plant syntheses of interesting DMT derivatives have their origins in the amino acid tryptophan. To make this transformation, the plant must follow one of two possible paths.

There can be decarboxylation of tryptophan to produce tryptamine followed by methylation, or there can be methylation of tryptophan followed by decarboxylation. And if there is to be aromatic substitution (say, 5-hydroxylation) it can occur at any intermediate stage. Each of these two needed steps can be achieved by enzyme systems called, not surprisingly, decarboxylases and N-methyl-transferases. In short, one can go from tryptophan to DMT by some enzymatic process that adds methyl groups either before or after decarboxylation.

Tryptophan is the obvious starting spot for this particular form of bio-conversion to DMT. It is an essential amino acid, an archetypical protein building block, and a universally accepted safe sedative, available for many years, inexpensively, in every health food store. Then, a few years ago, a major Japanese manufacturer shortened its production recipe by one step, a reactive by-product was left in as a trace contaminant, and a toxic impurity was formed which led to a problem called eosinophilia-myalgia syndrome (EMS). People were hurt, the source was found, the short-cut was removed, and the product was again potentially available as a non-prescription health aid. But, during the period of contamination, a total restriction on the availability of tryptophan was ordered by the FDA on the sales of the amino acid and, despite the open acknowledgment that the crisis is past, sale to health food stores, or to the public at large without a prescription, is no longer allowed. All of this is discussed in the tryptamine recipe.

Consider the N-methylated tryptophans. The mono-methyl and the tri-methyl alkaloidal amino acids are most commonly found in the small tropical shrubs and vines of the Leguminosae. N-Methyltryptophan is called abrine. Both abrine and abrin come from the seeds of the very poisonous plant *Abrus precatorius*, which has been lumped together with several other red-seed plants in the Leguminosae section earlier. There I talked about seeds and plants; here I am talking about compounds. There are three very similar words here. "Abrine" is the amino acid. "Abrin" is a proteinaceous isolate. "Abrus" is the original British Pharmaceutical Codex name for the actual seeds and it is, of course, the genus name of the plant. Very little has been reported about the amino acid, abrine, except that it can be present in the seed to the extent of 5%, but the isolate abrin is composed of proteins that are quite specific as to their effectiveness in hemagglutination and cytotoxicity. The lethal dose of abrin to a single mouse, by injection, may be about one microgram. The lethal dose to man of this material has been said to be less than a milligram, or perhaps just the amount that is in one of these most attractive and colorful seeds.

Right on top of this one must reckon with the trimethylated tryptophan, N,N,N-Trimethyltryptophan quaternary salt, the betaine of tryptophan and the monomethyl counterpart abrine which is found in the

Jequirity seeds (*Abrus precatorius*). And also in the leaf, stem, and root of this plant. It is also in the seeds of the edible lentil *Lens culinaris*, *Pterocarpus officinalis*, and several species of *Erythrina* (of the red bean story) which are best known for a completely unrelated group of almost indole alkaloids known as the erythroidines. It is also known from several species of the unrelated Malvaceae genus, *Sida*. There are *S. acuta*, *S. cordifolia*, *S. rhombifolia*, and *S. spinosa*, all of the mallow family, all with Hypaphorine or its methyl ester in the root or stem or leaf. This quaternary derivative of tryptophan is especially toxic as a convulsive poison, and must be respected in any isolation manipulations that are conducted with the plants. Yet it can sneak in, in trace amounts, in familiar places such as the root of some of the Legumes of the genus *Glycyrrhiza* which is, on the one hand, the source of the sweet flavoring, licorice, and yet has been shown to contain sizable amounts of hypaphorine.

Both of these methylated tryptophans, the mono- and the tri-, have also been isolated from plant sources as their methyl esters. Abrine methyl ester is known to be in *Sida cordifolia*. Another possible rich source is the poison pea from Australia. There is a group of Legumes of the genus *Gastrolobium* that are known locally as the poison this and poison that; there is Poison Shrub, Narrow-leaf Poison, Champion Bay Poison, Burr Poison, Prickle Poison, Crump-leaved Poison. There is a report specifically on *G. callistachys* that has mentioned the presence of the methyl ester of abrine. Hypaphorine methyl ester has been isolated from *Abrus precatorius*. Interestingly, N,N-dimethyltryptophan, the homologue that would be the direct decarboxylation precursor, is quite rare in the plant world. I am aware of a single report of its methyl ester, occurring in the leaves and stems of the Legume *Pultenaea altissima*.

The parading of these methylated tryptophans is for the reinforcement of the argument that they might serve as biosynthetic precursors to the methylated tryptamines. There have been some promising reports of the synthesis of DMT from suspension cultures of selected cell lines of the periwinkle plant *Catharanthus roseus*, where "unnatural" use of specific enzymes have been employed in the in vitro synthesis of alkaloids that are not natural to the periwinkle. Even the betaine-type quaternary hypaphorine (in *Lens culinaris*) can eliminate trimethylamine metabolically, giving rise to a potential synthetic precursor, indoleacrylic acid.

A final comment. Almost forty years ago a researcher in the National Institute of Mental Health, in Maryland, discovered an enzyme in rabbit lung that could transfer a methyl group to a tryptamine from the amino acid donor, S-adenosyl-methionine. With this system, serotonin gave N-methylserotonin, N-methylserotonin gave bufotenine, tryptamine gave N-methyltryptamine, and N-methyltryptamine gave DMT. What a

fabulous black-box that would make. Get two enzyme preparations, one that can methylate S-adenosyl-homocysteine to S-adenosyl-methionine and another that can regenerate S-adenosyl-homocysteine by transferring the methyl group to an available amine. Two catalysts in a chamber heated to 37 °C, with a spigot adding tryptamine at the top, and another releasing DMT out the bottom. That's the science — I'll leave the details to the engineers.

---

This has been a multidisciplinary romp along many different paths of science. Each of them presents factual information that can be of value in the understanding of the relationship between us and the chemical, between us and nature. We tend to be discouraged when we see the barriers, legal and social, being continuously made more inflexible. But nothing is cast in immutable stone. The Berlin Wall could never fall. It fell. The Evil Empire of the Soviet Union was an overwhelming enemy. Today it does not exist. And the War on Drugs must be pursued with increasing vigor until it is won. Perhaps tomorrow it will be declared over, and whether it was won or lost will be left unannounced. Our efforts must be gentle but continuing. As Samuel Johnson once said, "Few things are impossible to diligence and skill."

## CHAPTER 16. HOASCA VS. AYAHUASCA

(Shura's voice)

Let me start by explaining the title of this chapter, "Hoasca versus Ayahuasca." The distinction between these two names deals in part with past history and in part with current usage, and also with the need to canonize these materials with capital letters. Quite simply, but not completely accurately, the choice of the name to be used reflects where you are living. It just may be that hoasca is the Portuguese way of referring to the drink, and the original Spanish name for it was ayahuasca. I don't completely buy that, as I have heard both terms used widely by people expert in both languages. This is further complicated by the detail I have been told that the actual name "hoasca" is proprietary, owned by the UDV (União do Vegetal) church of Brazil. No sacrament, even made from the same plants by the same recipe, can have the name unless it has Mestre Gabriel's blessings, and is administered by some UDV Mestre in good standing. This may account for the use of the alternately spelled suffix of ayahuasca, "huasca," being used in synthetic terms such as pharmahuasca and gaiahuasca (non-hoasca combinations of plants), pharmahausca (combinations involving prescription drugs) and endohuasca (combinations of things already in the brain naturally). And I have recently seen this word creatively extended to terms such as acaciahuasca and mimosahuasca (made with leaves from the Acacia or the Mimosa tree). I will assume that if someone, somewhere, mixes yopo snuff with passion flower into an experimental drink, it will be called anadenantherahuasca or, perhaps, passifloraincarnatahuasca. Enough. I intend to use the term hoasca to represent the original beverage even without a papal OK, and use the term ayahuasca for things outside of the Amazon.

At a very recent meeting I heard a spokesman for one of the hoasca cultures pronounce this word not with two syllables (WAS-ka) or with four syllables (EYE-ah-WAS-ka) but with about two and a half syllables. It came out somewhere between ee-WAS-ka and eye-WAS-ka, but then he was

from New York, and there was no way I could tell from the vowels of his particular Upper Manhattan accent just how he had perceived the Brazilian original.

Another direction that the separation of the words hoasca and ayahuasca has taken, and one which is the substance of this chapter, has been in the loosening of the identity of the composition of the drink. In its native use in the Amazon, in both religious and indigenous native cultures, it is referred to as ayahuasca, of course, but by many other names as well. There are names such as caapi, lagé, yajé, mihi, dapa, natema, and pinde, but some of these can be used to refer to not just the drink but to the components of the drink. The terms "daime" and "vegetal" are the informal names used within the two churches discussed below. Hoasca remains the most widely recognized name used within the modern-day Brazilian cultural setting, and it implies a rigidly prescribed composition. But as the popularity has moved abroad, and the concept of mixing two drugs together has become more widespread and corrupted, the term ayahuasca is the only one encountered. Over the last several years this term has spread widely, taking on an almost mystical connotation. The quantity of lay research in this area is staggering, and it is occurring today in many countries around the world, including the United States. Every month or so I learn of another combination of plants or chemicals or both, that has been tried and found valid. And is happily called ayahuasca. I can only guess as to the much larger number of unknown trials of home-designed ayahuasca that have been made and have failed.

An added popularity of the term ayahuasca has arisen, over the last few years, from a growing tendency of the "New Age" section of our society, those with the visionary-herbal-medicine-Gaia-natural-health-oriented philosophy, to look to the native cultures of the tropic forests or barren deserts as the last source of nature's wisdom. Books on alternate living styles, vision quests, and personal development have made words such as shamanism, curandero and ayahuasquero a part of our current vocabulary. Recently, several specialized books, such as, *Ayahuasca Analogues*, by Jonathan Ott and *Ayahuasca Visions*, by Luis Eduardo Luna and Pablo Amaringo, have appeared. I doubt that there has been a book written on the subjects of ethnobotany or shamanism in the last twenty years that does not have, if not a chapter, at least extensive discussion involving ayahuasca or the ayahuasqueros.

The origins of ayahuasca are very old; it has a tradition of use which predates written records. It is part of both the ancient religions and the healing customs of the native people who live throughout the Amazon area, from Brazil to the upper areas of Colombia, Equator and Peru. Many studies have been reported on its use in shamanism, and especially in healing

rituals. Sadly, many of the people who have defined the culture there are today being disenfranchised as second-class citizens because they lack both Western language and political representation. No, it is worse than that. In the opinion of most South Americans, the native Indians are filthy, stupid and lazy, and are certainly holding up progress. There is little if any participation of this Indian population in the present-day religious ceremony.

There can be ambiguity with the use of the actual word, ayahuasca, itself. In the Peruvian Amazon, even today, the term can be used to represent a drink made just from the plant *Banisteriopsis caapi* alone, and the name is used to refer to the plant as well as its extracts. In fact, the origin of the word "ayahuasca" was from the Quichua Indians, to whom it means "vine of the souls" or "vine of the dead." There are other names found in other regions; yajé in Colombia has provided the name yageine for the alkaloidal extract (which has also been called telepathine, reflecting its presumed telepathic properties). The principal individual alkaloids that have been identified as present in the plant are harmine, harmaline and tetrahydroharmine. These compounds are described individually in the recipe portion of this book. There is no DMT present in yajé.

As a brew, ayahuasca is used widely in the Amazon area, in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil. Its social and medical use depends more on its purgative properties than on visionary activity. It has been called "la purga" and "la limpia." Other names that have been used for ayahuasca, such as camaramti or chahua may reflect the ugly brown color of the final extract, or the addition of other plants, generically called "misha." In most cases, the field reports are social or anthropological, and the identities of any added plants are not documentable. An important point that should be made, is that it is necessary to distinguish the healing processes that are described in the shamanistic world from the religious use described below. In the original cultural format, it is the shaman who takes the ayahuasca for both diagnosis and treatment of the patient. Some of this is still seen in the present religious use (group healing) but in recent years the patient has himself more frequently participated in the healing by taking the brew.

Hoasca, a subset of the broad ayahuasca world, is the term that is associated with religious use. It is the admixture of two explicitly named plants. This tea is produced by boiling together the bark of the plant *Banisteriopsis caapi* and the leaves of the plant *Psychotria viridis*. Hoasca is quite simply the decoction that remains after the aqueous extracts have been decanted from the insoluble residues, and boiled down to a brown sludge. The best known practitioners of the making and using of hoasca are the members of several religious groups that are centered in Brazil. Two of the best known call themselves the UDV and the Santo Daime, and a

revealing view of hoasca can be had by looking through the eyes of these two groups.

The larger of the two churches is the União do Vegetal, known popularly as the UDV. The Portuguese pronunciation of the abbreviation is OOH-day-VAY. A smaller organization is the Santo Daime (pronounced DYE-meh), and there are a number of yet smaller groups such as the Barquinia and the Comunidata 2000. These also use some form of the hoasca sacrament, but I will not discuss them here. The two major churches which I want to describe have their own philosophy, their own structure, and their own vocabulary.

The UDV was formed in the 1960's by a rubber trapper named Gabriel who observed ayahuasca and appreciated its magical properties. He inspired several associations of people from European, native Indian and Afro-American backgrounds, and these were collectively known as caboclos. By spinning together some fragments of early mythology with some aspects of not only the Catholic belief system but the jungle gods and spirits as well, a new church, the UDV, came into being. This has maintained an absolute confidence in the sacredness of the plants of the jungle. The symbol of this resynthesis is the sacred drink hoasca. The church has some 6000 members composed of an ever-growing number (currently 55) of separate churches or chapels called nucleos (the plural actually used for nucleus, rather than nuclei). The members of the UDV congregation are relatively upper middle class, with good incomes and good homes, and the leader of each congregation is known as a Mestre (Master). The congregation includes physicians, lawyers, bankers, politicians, and other similar professional people. They pride themselves on having taken complete control over what they see as personality weaknesses, such as the use of tobacco and alcohol.

The Santo Daime church is a little older, having been founded in the 1930's, also by a group of caboclos. Its full official name is the "Doctrine of Santo Daime" and its members are called Daimistas. There are some eight or nine separate sects, whereas the UDV has just one, which is called the "União" (or Union). Each sect of the Santo Daime is composed of a number of communities, also called nucleos, which are maintained largely by agricultural activities, or by small or medium scale businesses. The leaders of each unit are called "Padrinhos" (or little Fathers) who are regarded as being more spiritually developed. The members tend more to the blue-collar class of society, and are a bit more casual in their social interactions, with guests more often brought to services and with a somewhat more lenient attitude towards tobacco and socializing. But the hoasca, the daime, still plays a dominant role, in place of alcohol, in this society. As with the UDV, healing is also held as the unifying goal of the church. Illnesses are



much more than bodily events, since they are often recognized as coming from the mind and thus must be healed through the mind. I have asked several people as to the origin of the term Santo Daime, and have received several different answers. I have heard that it is really the name of a Saint. Or that it comes from the verb to give, and thus it really means Saint Give-unto-me, or perhaps, Saint Gimme. Or that Santo is a form of the word for sacred, or maybe even health, and the allusion is to the medical healing purposes, and stands for Give-me-health. The Daimistas call hoasca "Daime."

Although there is a history of a rather conservative administrative view of drugs and drug use in Brazil, the positive social position and the health stance of both churches, especially in light of their remarkable success in reducing or stopping the use of alcohol, have won them the governmental approval of hoasca as being a legally accepted religious sacrament. This de facto approval of the use of a drug in a religious context has been seen as a valuable precedent, by many in the United States, for the social acceptance of a similar philosophy in this country. There have been quiet moves made to form branches of these churches here. It goes without saying that there will be very little publicity on the hoasca aspect of these events until there is a general acceptance of these activities as bona fide religions.

There are two specific plants used in combination for the making of hoasca; these are *Banisteriopsis caapi* (originally, *Banisteria caapi*) and *Psychotria viridis*. *B. caapi* is a vine that is known within the UDV as the male component of hoasca and has been called "The Force." It has the popular name of Mariri. In the Santo Daime, it is called Jagube. It contains several (b-carbolines that are monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI-A) which effectively allow the DMT of the second hoasca component to express its action orally. The vine is beaten to a mixture of powder and pulp, called po and befecao. I have recently learned that there are two distinct variants of *B. caapi* which possibly have not been described as separate individuals in the botanical literature. There is a smooth form of the vine called "tukunaca" which is predominately found in the cooler areas of Southern Brazil. Another variant has large nodes where the branching occurs; it is called caupurí and is found in Amazonia. When one vine is transplanted to the natural habitat of the other, the defining characteristics are maintained, suggesting true genetic distinction. The hoasca made from the caupurí provides a more severe spectrum of toxic symptoms than the tukunaca variation. The side-effects such as vomiting and diarrhea, nystagmus and muscular tremors can be extreme, suggesting a stronger, or even different alkaloid composition. This theory is presently being tested.

*P. viridis* is the second plant of hoasca. It is a shrub, and its leaves are considered the female half of the team. It has been called "The Light,"

and has a common name of Chacrona, or Chacrana, within the UDV. In the Santo Daime, the plant is called the queen (La Rainha) and its leaves are handled exclusively by women. It is the contributor of the N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) component of the hoasca, which is the factor that is believed to provide its psychedelic effects.

The details of the hoasca preparation procedure (a ritual known as "Preparo" in the UDV and "Feitio" in the Santo Daime) varies from group to group, but the fundamental steps are simple and straightforward. These are extraction, separation, and concentration. The stems and branches of the *B. caapi* vine are beaten thoroughly to break loose the bark, and the pulped mass is combined with the leaves of the *P. viridis* in big pots which are usually aluminum. Water is added, and all is boiled until the extracts are dark and the pulp is spent. The liquid phase is separated, and the clear water extracts are boiled down to the dark, foul-tasting residue that is called hoasca.

The UDV refers to the effects produced by the completed hoasca as "burracheira" or the "Strange Force." The drink itself, the hoasca, is informally referred to as cha (tea) or vegetal. The quality of a batch of tea is usually discussed in terms of its force and/or light.

Although many analyses have been conducted on the two component plants of hoasca, the composition of the drug itself is relatively unknown. Such an analysis is a needed check on any possible changes to the alkaloid content that might occur in response to the extraction and concentration steps which are time-consuming and which are conducted at a rolling boil in the open air. Also, if the final hoasca is kept unrefrigerated for any time, fermentation from unexpected inoculations do indeed occur, but apparently there is no detectable change in the alkaloid content.

A number of analyses of daime from different Santo Daime sources have consistently shown the two carboline alkaloids harmine and tetrahydroharmine in major amounts, accompanied by lesser amounts of DMT. Much smaller amounts of harmaline have been seen, and noted. In one instance when a microscopic examination was made, considerable quantities of both yeast and fungal cells were present.

With the UDV, the tea is consumed only within the ritual context, called a session. These sessions take place about every two weeks. The presiding church leader, the Mestre, provides each participant with a single dosage of hoasca which is consumed at one time. The early part of the experience, conducted while seated, with eyes closed and in the presence of music, is when there might be visions experienced. It is here that the purgative effects of the hoasca are experienced; vomiting and diarrhea are common. The participant is attended to by a church member. After this, there takes place the "spiritual cleaning" that is the expression of the "force"

component of the drink. This period is called the *miracão*, and is considered a distraction; it lasts perhaps two hours. These factors become less intense with frequent exposure to the hoasca. The state of mind then becomes very clear, with a heightened sense of awareness usually accompanied by a muscular tremor. It is during this period that there is on-going interaction of the participants with each other, and with the Mestre. This is the "light" component of the drink. Questions are asked, answers are given; there is a continuing exchange of ideas, with the singing of songs and much laughter. The Mestre then brings the session to a close with a song. After this, there is time given to socializing and the congregation disperses at about the fourth hour.

The relationship of the *miracão* period to the overall service can be seen by the comments of one user:

"When I encountered the UDV I was amazed, and still am, with their level of organization, research, networking and loving brotherhood. I will always be grateful and indebted to them for the many things I learned and experienced. My first sessions were very powerful and, for me, synthesized together many aspects of all my preceding work. But as I continued I found that these intense experiences became decreasingly frequent. Most were mild. I began tracking the patterns of nausea and vomiting and began to question how this was related to a particular batch of tea. The orthodox church members feel that this nausea is a form of purification, detoxification, penance or even punishment, and I personally believe that the visuals distract me from hearing the message of the sacrament, and I must suffer them until the true voice is heard."

The services of the Santo Daime employ the same tea, called daime by them, but their structure is quite different. The ritual is called "*hinário*" and the daime is distributed at approximately two hour intervals. There is the collective singing of hymns throughout the services along with the constant movement of a synchronized and repetitive dance called the "*bailado*." Overseers prod the dancers when they begin to feel weary and want to rest. The *hinário* takes place around a central table in the shape of a six-pointed star. Special rituals occur periodically, which are called "Concentrations" and "Star Works." A concentration occurs twice a month and, as with the *hinário*, the daime is consumed at periodic intervals. The participants are seated in fixed positions (head up, back straight, uncrossed arms and legs) and maintain silence for periods of up to an hour. The energy

that is thus allowed to pass freely though the body is directed in a general way to any who might be ill, either inside or outside of the community.

The ritual Star Works is dedicated specifically to an ill individual. The service often takes place in a "House of the Star" which is found only in the larger communities, and which is dedicated to curing rituals. This temple has a hexagonal shape and has a Star of David-shaped table in the center which holds incense sticks and revered objects such as paintings of Catholic saints and Christ, and of earlier Daimista leaders. Candles are everywhere. The congregation is divided by sex. Twelve chairs are put around this table for selected members, and the rest of the participants sit on benches. Daime is distributed, and the congregation alternates between silence and the singing of hymns. The padrinho delivers a sermon called a *preleição* which is interrupted regularly with the group's singing of additional hymns and the consumption of additional daime.

A contrast between the emphasis placed on the importance of the *hoasca* within the UDV, and the importance of group structure within the Santo Daime, is clear from a quotation from a Padrinho:

"The ritual establishes everything. Ritual in each initiatory school is an element for grasping the material. I think that at the point at which we obtain spiritual evolution we are not going to need rituals anymore, for we will be the ritual. Christ did not need the ritual — Jesus was the ritual. He went there and showed the bread and wine. Today the ritual is Christ's force, so much so that in the Catholic Church, ritual is nothing more than the element to grasp and command faith. Ritual is like a bottle that contains the liquid of knowledge. It is only to give it form; it doesn't change the liquid, the content. The liquid is not altered. What purpose has ritual? It is in order to sit, to separate masculine and feminine energies. The person sits in concentration and drinks daime. It is not with one person head-bowed, another with legs up. Every thing is in order. This is our ritual."

The public self-images of the two churches are quite different from one another. The UDV is a considerably more private group, tending to avoid publicity and outside interaction. They see themselves as playing a role in the development of a strong social structure of increasing value to the individual. The daimistas' view is more immediate. Salvation is to be found at the moment, as the world may end tomorrow. Both bring into their structures much of the Christian ethic, but from very different branches of

it. "Onward Christian Soldiers" versus "Apocalypse Now." But both groups share the absolute belief that the sacrament hoasca allows access to the voice of God.

The ever-widening awareness of the psychopharmacological activity of the South American hoasca drink has led to a rapidly growing popularity of the concept of combining drugs. The current day exploration is truly world-wide, and extends well beyond the co-administration of these two specific South American plants. Not only are other active plants being combined with one-another, or active plants combined with synthetic drugs, but even the co-administration of two totally synthetic drugs is becoming an exploring ritual. This is all leading to a bewilderingly complex picture as there are so many variables that can be encountered.

Each of the two components of this on-going social experiment can be chosen from a long list of possibilities, making any organization of the situation a two-dimensional presentation rather than just a single list of the usual suspects. Each will have its own administration dosage, leading to both quantity and ratio as variables, and when plant extracts are involved, the concentrations of the active ingredient or ingredients are probably unknown. And the two materials may be administered in some timed sequence (which follow which, and by how long?). It is possible that there are no two experiments, anywhere, that will be duplicates of one another. I suspect that any attempt to organize this chaotic hodgepodge into a logical pattern and to come to a unifying conclusion is doomed. Even the underlying concept that one of the materials is a promoter of the other (something that inhibits the metabolic destruction of something else) is being lost in this complexity. And it must be remembered that most of these many research combinations are being referred to simply as ayahuasca.

Let me try to tell this expanded part of the story in a way that extends the picture outwards from the two specific plants of hoasca to the many, many substitutions for each of these two components, which I have here called ayahuasca. And, in this broadening, I will also elaborate on the replacement of plants (quite limited in numbers of species and intrinsically not reproducible) with chemicals (nearly unlimited in number, and intrinsically totally reproducible). Thus, there will be other plant-plus-plant combinations (only a few of these have been studied) and plant-chemical combinations, where either of the two original components is replaced by a chemical or a combination of chemicals. The chemical substitutes are more reasonably placed in the recipe portion of this book, and are not in this chapter.

There are a number of reports in the United States and in Europe of the employment of the exact plants that are the well established components of the South American hoasca. Both the UDV and the Santo Daime have

formed churches outside of Brazil, and both churches are becoming increasingly accepted as recognized religions. The overall purpose and philosophy of each, both the Christian sub-structure and the emphasis on healing and health, are largely intact. So, too, is the role played by the definitional sacrament, hoasca. This material may be brought into the country from church-related sources in Brazil, but it may also be produced here from domestically raised plants. Both *B. caapi* and the *P. viridis* are legal, and are easily raised in the United States. An ever-increasing number of botanical supply houses are making seeds, cuttings or rooted starts available, as there is a steadily growing market to be filled.

But quite beyond this church and sacrament picture, there is an exciting renaissance in a discipline called ethnopharmacology. This is the exploring of one's environment for new things that have some instructive or beneficial action on an individual. This term has been reserved historically for the studies of the drug-oriented aspects of more remote cultures, past or present, in alien parts of the world. But today the term is fully applicable to many people in our Western world who are searching nature in the hope of an increased understanding of it, to be taught by it or to be entertained by it.

The exploration of pairs of plants other than the *B. caapi* and *P. viridis*, where one contains the inhibitor and the other contains the stuff to be inhibited, can be called botanical ayahuasca. I am using the term ayahuasca here with this very broad definition to maintain a distinction between new and novel mixtures and the more classical and rigidly defined drink, hoasca. The term ayahuasca is also becoming widely used to describe a mixture where at least one of the two components is a pure chemical rather than a plant. I have earlier mentioned some new and unexpected compound words involving the suffix huasca, but it seems that for this essay, ayahuasca is adequate.

Regardless of the name employed, there is a consistent role played by each of the two components. There is a thing that is intrinsically inactive but which inhibits the body's destruction of a drug that would normally be unavailable to the person. And there is a second thing that is intrinsically active but is rapidly and effectively destroyed metabolically. A potentiating, or allowing factor, and another that is potentiated or allowed. This is the combination that today answers to the term "ayahuasca."

Who are the players on these two pharmacological teams? The role of the *B. caapi* component of hoasca is being taken over, at least in the United States, almost exclusively by the plant *Peganum harmala*, although there are a number of alternate (b-carboline sources such as the seeds of *Tribulis terrestris* which have been used in man. *P. harmala* is a rich source of both harmaline and of harmine and is readily available from a number of

domestic sources. If the local Indian/Arab retail store does not recognize this binomial, try another name for this product: "esfand." You may be surprised to find that they sell this incense in one pound packages, even in five pound packages. Since this seed contains most of the same alkaloids that are in the *B. caapi* component of hoasca, the choice of this plant as a substitute has a certain authenticity.

The search for plants to play the role of *P. viridis* in hoasca has called for much more imagination. In principle, any plant that contains DMT could be used, to maintain the effect of the original hoasca. There are many botanic sources of this ubiquitous alkaloid, and some of these have been mentioned in the Chapter "DMT is Everywhere." A wide variety of grasses, roots, bark and leaves have been explored. Another alkaloid that needs inhibition of its destruction is 5-MeO-DMT, which is also widely found in many natural sources. It, too, is not normally active orally. Recently, however, there has been a move to explore many other well known drugs as this second component, perhaps illogically in that all these are well established as being orally active. For this second part of ayahuasca, I have heard of trials with materials such as LSD, mescaline, mushrooms, datura, and even dextromethorphan. It is almost as if the *P. harmala* is being called upon to play a role of modifier or enhancer (or even to an extent, contributor) of activity, rather than one of being a simple revealer of activity. This brings up a vital question: If *P. harmala* can directly contribute to the action of another drug by some process other than that of potentiation or synergism, or by simply allowing this other drug to become orally active due to its presence, then it would have a pharmacological action in its own right. What is the action of *P. harmala* all by itself?

At this point, let me open a can of worms just enough to introduce you to the rather incredible color and magic of the territorial rights and egos of the academic world. There has been a question bounced about for many years in the area of the history of pharmacy. In the Rg Veda, the earliest scripture of the Hindus, there are numerous references to an intoxicating plant-derived drink known as Soma. The evolving palaver has been centered on the attempt to identify just what plant Soma really was. I have a number of friends who have or have had very strong opinions as to how this question should be answered. And, believe me, not all of these opinions are the same!

Let me introduce you to R. Gordon Wasson. He was one of the most extraordinary explorers, adventurers and authors that I have ever known. His professional training was as a financier and banker but, in alliance with his wife Valentina, he discovered the world of magic mushrooms, and the rest is history. He followed a number of excellent clues which led him to the Mexican state of Oaxaca, to the Mazatec world of Maria Sabina, and to

the explosive announcement in Life Magazine, almost forty years ago, of the existence and impact of the psychopharmacological activity to be found in the Genus *Psilocybe*. I have quibbled as to whether he should be called a mycological scientist or a mycological scholar, but there is no question that he must be called a mycological amateur in the truest English sense of that word. Having been seduced into the mycophile world by his wife, he became a devotee of the discipline. It became for him an adventure rather than a profession. And it strongly encouraged him to seek out a mushroom motif in everything that his research touched upon. I remember a meeting that we both attended, in Port Townsend, Washington, where he presented a scholarly essay on the prevalence of the mushroom icon in the early history of central Mexico. During a lecture, he showed a hemispherical stone figure that looked for all the world like a mushroom's fruiting body. This, he said, is proof that the mushroom was a sacred entity in Mexican culture and religion. A question from the audience suggested that since this figure was almost exactly the diameter of the sporting balls used in the Aztec games contests, that perhaps, just perhaps, the stone figure might be a mold upon which the rubber balls were cast. If you took two rubber half-spheres and glued them together, you would get one rubber ball. The question was not answered, nor even acknowledged. For Wasson, there was no question but that the stone image was a mushroom. As to the identity of Soma, when the clues all led him to the conclusion that the Hindu plant was the fly agaric mushroom *Amanita muscaria*, not surprisingly, he found the total body of the accumulated evidence completely supported this assignment.

Let me introduce you to David Stophlet Flattery. He, too, is a scientist and scholar, and the author of a remarkable book, *Haoma and Harmaline*. Here, an equally persuasive argument is made that the Soma of yore might well be the seeds of *Peganum harmala*, harmel, mountain rue or wild rue. It is now commonly called Syrian Rue, but older texts call it African Rue, the "semen Harmalae sive rutae sylvestris" of the early European Pharmacopoeias, or the Haoma of early Middle Eastern Folklore, which are known by the common name of esfand. Its properties match, equally satisfactorily, the generalized descriptions of the Soma plant in the original Rg Veda. It was a shrub in the Asian Steppes and the Persian Plateau as well as in Afghanistan and Northern Tibet, so it can meet the geographic demands of the ancient Soma fields. It has been the classical source of a deeply colored dye known as Turkey Red which has been used in the coloring of fezes and carpets in both Turkey and Iran. The seeds also provide an oil popular in Egypt as "Zit-el-Harmel" which is sold as an aphrodisiac and narcotic. The consumption of the actual seeds themselves has a well established reputation for giving rise to an intoxication that



might answer the tantalizing clues of the Rg Veda.

Some caution should be taken with the old literature, because in the original Persian biology classifications the term "rue" has been used in quite a general way. It used to be that *Peganum harmala* and *Ruta graveolens* were considered the wild, and the cultivated, variations of the same plant. The classic origins of the two generic names are parallel; "peganon" was the Greek word for rue, and in Latin "rue" was simply rue. Today these plants are classified as being in completely separate botanic families (Zygophyllaceae and Rutaceae) and they are morphologically quite different. The present day *R. graveolens* is called the common rue, or the herb of grace. It is considered a European plant that was involved in mediaeval medicine as a stimulant and an irritant, and was claimed to have been used by witches and as a symbol of repentance. It is commonly cultivated as a garden herb. In fact, the sample I have in my garden was bought at a Mexican market on 24th street in San Francisco. Its leaf has a sharp smell which some people like, and which others claim reminds them of cat urine. It certainly has a following due to its food use, but I would hardly call it an intoxicant.

So, just what is the action of *P. harmala* seeds alone when they are not used in admixture with some other component? There is indeed something there but it takes a lot of seed. There are several reports of explorers taking many grams of straight seed, usually ground up and then boiled in quite a lot of water (which sometimes contains something acidic) into a tea. But by definition, if the plant alone is a candidate for the Soma role, then it should have some kind of noteworthy activity without any second component, to warrant its historic position in so many cultures.

Here is a description of a recent trial, which highlights some of its properties:

"I boiled one ounce (28 grams) of viable *Peganum harmala* seed for seven hours in a liter of water, removed the seeds, and boiled the extract down to half its volume. The mixture was brown, and bitter, and I drank it down. In about forty-five minutes, a pleasant lassitude took me over, and I sat so as to observe my environment. I noticed that the objects in my vision seemed to have multiple contours surrounding them. Even small body motions suggested nausea to me, so I retired to quiet, empty darkness. There commenced a gentle upwelling of hypnogogic imagery that was quite different from anything I was familiar with. There was a vision of seemingly abstract fractal patterns that quickly evolved into what reminded

me of foliage that started close to me and then grew to fill the whole visual field. The original spiral patterns of organization evolved into realistic images (in shades of blue and green) of buses speeding through city streets, street corners, a busy supermarket. This visual phase lasted for almost an hour, at which point the nausea returned very strongly. Following vigorous vomiting, I felt quite relaxed again, but the visionary phase of the experiment seemed to have come to a close."

One must keep in mind that there is also harmaline as well as harmine present in sizable amounts in these seeds, as compared to the largely harmine contribution of *B. caapi* to native ayahuasca. In the one assay I have run, they are present in pretty much equal quantities. Both are effective inhibitors of the amine oxidase enzyme system of the body, which is nature's own way of protecting us from poisons such as DMT. There are many styles of oxidation inhibition, and I must admit that I don't know one from another. There is an amine oxidase inhibitor system that is called an "A" inhibitor, and another that is called a "B" inhibitor. Then the picture is further confused with a claim for a non-specific oxidase inhibitor. It is a fact that there are foods that are toxic if you have inhibited your detoxification mechanisms. There have been problems with foods such as pickled herring, red wine, and particular cheeses when a person is being medicated with certain serotonin receptor drugs which act as enzyme inhibitors. There are many clinically employed anti-depressant drugs that show their activity through this monoamineoxidase inhibition mechanism, and these could be very threatening to a person using ayahuasca. Some of these prescription drugs, given in the treatment of clinical depression, have been used as substitutes for the *B. caapi* component of ayahuasca. The pure chemicals themselves, harmaline or harmine, are discussed in the appropriate recipe part of this book.

I had intended to share a few ayahuasca reports involving Syrian Rue and any of several other amines, with the rue expressed as an approximate quantity of harmaline and/or harmine. This plan suddenly became terribly misleading when I learned that there are some other, very different alkaloids in the seeds. Tetrahydroharmine is pretty well known, and of course might play some role in the action of the plant. But non-tryptamine, non b-carboline alkaloids? I was totally ignorant of these. I was looking by GCMS at a pH 9 methylene chloride extract of a certain batch of *P. harmala* seeds, to verify the approximate ratio of harmine to harmaline, and I noticed a big and broad peak that had the molecular weight equal to that of the simplest hydroxy tetrahydro-b-carboline (7-HO-THbC,  $C_{11}H_{12}N_2O$ ). And

there was a smaller, earlier, sharp peak that lacked the hydroxy group. Could this be the simplest possible tetrahydro-b-carboline, just THbC itself? I did not remember these ever having been reported in *P. harmala* before. In fact, I would need a trip to the library to see if they had been reported in any plant before. Both 6-HO-THbC and THbC have been formed from serotonin and tryptamine (with formaldehyde) and have been reported to be found in rat brain, often in association with the pineal gland. And there had been assigned to the latter compound the totally unappealing name of tryptoline. At least that allows the serotonin numbering system to be used, but gives rise to yet more outlandish chimera such as methtryptoline as a literature synonym for tetrahydroharman. But all of this is in rats which are animals, not plants or people.

There is an old saying in chemistry (and I am sure also in physics and any other exploratory technical discipline) which is an important caution: "Wait until tomorrow before you publish your discovery." I remember the time a couple of decades ago that David Ladder and I were up to our ears (figuratively) in poison oak. I had made a hexane extract (with some care as I used to be very sensitive to it) and we had put it into the chemical ionization mass spectrograph. Well, everyone knows that the C-15 family of phenolic alkanes and alkenes characterizes poison ivy, and the C-17 family is the hallmark of poison oak. And there they were. There was the expected neat cluster of nice peaks, all with their different degrees of unsaturation, at the C-17 location. Then, we both noticed a similar cluster at the position of C-21. There were four additional carbon atoms in each molecule. Wow. Has no one seen this before? Had no one run the mass that high, and these new things had simply escaped observation? The discovery of the century! But the next day, pinning down all alternate explanations, we asked the operator of the CIMS what carrier gas he had been using. Isobutane, he said, which just happens to contain four carbon atoms. Why, he asked? We told him, and he re-ran our sample with ammonia instead. The C-21 area was totally clean.

Back to the hydroxy-TH3C story. I looked under this empirical formula in the Merck Index, and there was listed a compound which I had never heard of before, called vasicine. It is a quinazoline alkaloid, also called peganine, that had been isolated from *P. harmala* by Späth in 1934. And the alkaloid without the hydroxy group was also known, and had the named desoxypeganine. And there is a ketone peganine which has a structure closely resembling methaqualone; I have put the appropriate pictures in the discussion part of the recipe for harmaline.

Looking again at the cracking patterns of my "new" THbC's, they are very reasonable for these well known quinazoline bases. And there appears to be a vasicinone and a desoxyvasicinone present in these seeds as

well. It was a personal disappointment to realize that I had not discovered a new alkaloid in Syrian Rue. But it was exciting to realize that this compound was there in pretty good quantities, and could very well contribute to an unpredictable extent to the pharmacology either of *P. harmala* itself, or of its combination with other plants or chemicals.

So, since I was thirsty for another drink from the Pierian spring, I dove into the literature to learn what I could about the pharmacology of these, to me, new alkaloids. My God, they do everything! Whereas harmine, and especially harmaline, are inhibitors of the monoamine oxidase enzyme, keeping amines such as DMT from being destroyed (the underlying basis of action of ayahuasca) it turns out that desoxyyepganine is a potent inhibitor of an entirely different enzyme, one that is called acetylcholinesterase. This is the body's detoxification operator for getting the neurotransmitter acetylcholine out of the synapse when it is no longer needed to conduct a signal from one nerve to another. If the transmitter cannot be destroyed after it has functioned, the nerve system keeps firing and produces what is called parasympathetic toxicity. There can be cardiac depression, vasodilatation, and the flow of saliva and tears. Anticholinergics are members of a pharmacological classification which includes the best of our insecticides and nerve gases. Vasicine is perhaps a tenth as effective as desoxyyepganine as an anticholinergic, but it appears to be a good bronchodilator in man, as well as a uterotonic and abortifacient in test animals. These alkaloids are also found in other plants, such as *Adhatoda vasica* which is the origin of the name vasicine. The leaves and flowers of the closely related *A. vasicina* have an ancient native reputation for effective use in the relief of colds, coughs and bronchitis. And it has come to light that a forage legume, *Galega orientalis*, is a well established source of vasicine and by an intriguing twist of fate, it also has a common name of a rue, Goat's Rue! The urge to pursue every factoid until it leads to another factoid is difficult to resist. It is obvious that this kind of botanical and chemical-free association will quickly lead into fascinating areas that have absolutely nothing to do with South American religious sacraments. And religion and religious sacraments are what this chapter is all about. There is even serotonin itself present, as well as a positional isomer of 6-hydroxytryptamine, which has a distinct pharmacological profile of its own.

So enough already. To be too thorough or specific about the possible side-effects of minor components in a plant material is to establish a place for them in the subconscious mind of the user, and this could subtly lead to his experiencing them as "unexpected" complications. The amounts of all the alkaloids in *P. harmala* other than the b-carbolines, those that are directly responsible for its virtue as a substitute for the *B. caapi* component of ayahuasca, appear to be pharmacologically trivial. Nonetheless, I de-

cided not to use estimates of these two alkaloids as a measure of this component, but to stick with the actual weight of the seeds that had been used. There is simply too much variation in the alkaloidal composition to allow such a calculation to be of value.

How much of these several b-carbolines does a given weight of *P. harmala* seeds represent? The alkaloid content has been reported to cover quite a wide range (from as low as two and as high as six percent), so a gram of seed has potentially twenty to sixty milligrams of the desired alkaloids. But here, suddenly, there is a new and treacherous variable. There is a difference between weights and volumes; grams are weights and the kitchen containers are volumes. From one individual seed, to a level teaspoonful of seeds, to a one-shot saki tumbler full of seeds, one will have a dry gross weight of from two and a half milligrams to three milligrams, to maybe three grams, to a half ounce (almost fifteen grams). The alkaloidal content will be in the ballpark range of a tenth of a milligram, to something over a hundred milligrams, to something over a half gram for each of these measuring units. So, a typical individual dosage of *P. harmala* seeds for an ayahuasca experiment would be a level teaspoonful, or three grams, or something over a thousand seeds if you have tweezers and patience rather than a kitchen. This is certainly a sloppy ruler for measuring things, but it works. A small tally of the activity of the extracts of the seeds alone is included in the harmaline recipe in the second half of the book. Also there, please find an algorithm for converting teaspoonfuls to grams.

The action of *P. harmala* seed extracts when used not alone, but in concert with some other amine factor, can be quite dramatic at a much lower dosage. And this higher potency means that much less of the seed extract is really needed than when one makes use of the *B. caapi*. So, what is the action of *P. harmala* seeds when they are in admixture with some other component? I had met an enthusiastic researcher when I was recently at a conference in Göttingen, Germany, who had devised a most remarkable structure for studying these aspects of ayahuasca. He said that he had developed a grid containing a number of component cells, labeled horizontally with the names of potential inhibitors (six of them, the 6-methoxy and 7-methoxy substituted derivatives of harman, harmalan, and tetrahydroharman) and vertically with the two basic parenterally active tryptamines (DMT and 5-methoxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine). Each display cell contained a plot of the doses of the appropriate combinations that one member of his research group had chosen to explore, and following his trial he would place a green, yellow or red star there, noting the exact quantities taken, and whether the effects he had experienced could be classified as inactive, or maybe active, or really active. His plan was to allow each member of his experiment research group to choose a cell (defining

the drugs to be used in combination that day) and a dosage level that appealed to his curiosity for the day. After the experiment was done, he would place his personally initialed star, with the appropriate color, within the appropriate cell. It was a fine idea, and the results would certainly have been a treasure of information, but I never saw any of them. I have no idea if the whole story was fact or fantasy.

The majority of all ayahuasca trials that I am aware of have been between the seeds of *P. harmala* and purified DMT, both taken orally. There are several dozen such trials that I know about, some in the literature (largely taken from Ott's *Ayahuasca Analogues*) or from personal communications to me from a lot of people out there. In the absence of green, yellow and red stickers, I will paint a word-picture of these results. A prototype experiment might go as follows:

(1) The experimental subject consumes three grams of *P. harmala* seeds that had been lightly ground (to break the husks) and placed in gelatin capsules. An alternate and more cumbersome preparation is the boiling of the seeds in a water suspension, which might be lightly acidified with lime or lemon juice. Sometimes they have been ground, sometimes not.

(2) About an hour following the consumption of the *P. harmala* seeds, seventy five milligrams of N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) are taken, also contained in capsules. The time interval between the *P. harmala* seeds and the DMT can be quite variable. In many regimens all the capsules are taken at the same time, and sometimes there is a gap of ten or twenty minutes between them. One hour appears to be a satisfactory period allowing release and absorption of the b-carboline alkaloids. The use of one hundred milligrams of DMT rather than seventy five leads to a somewhat stronger, but completely acceptable experience.

I have heard very mixed reports from trials employing *P. harmala* and the second of the biotic tryptamines, 5-methoxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine, or 5-MeO-DMT. Apparently, modest amounts of both components gives a modest experience, but I have had two reports of truly toxic crises with larger quantities. There is one report of a dosage of about five grams of *P. harmala* seed (water extract) followed in thirty five minutes with ten milligrams of 5-MeO-DMT. The toxicity presented in two phases:

"In a half hour there was a mild hallucinosis noted which in another half hour deepened considerably. There was an uncharacteristic body rush but in another two hours all effects were waning to my relief. This relief was short lived as some thirty minutes later there was a very abrupt onset of problems. There was a very rapidly building sympathomimetic situation and for the next three hours I was subjected to intense stimulation with rapid

pounding heart-beat and a strange hallucinosis. These effects came in waves: ten minutes of extreme adrenergic stress without appreciable psychic component, followed for a minute or two where I would feel basically 'normal' which would, in turn, be followed by a hallucinosis similar to but more intense than when massive amounts of *P. harmala* seed had been consumed as a single entity. Strangely there was no body strain the next day despite my conviction at the time that I'd have a heart attack or massive cerebral aneurysm."

A second report I have recently read about, with almost exactly the same exposure to *P. harmala* and to 5-MeO-DMT, led to vomiting, temporary blindness, and amnesia followed by extensive sleeplessness. Yet another report with unstated quantities of both drugs indicated a cardiovascular incident similar to the quoted one above. The three of these together support a strong word of caution that perhaps 5-MeO-DMT cannot be interchanged casually with DMT in these calculations, based solely on the dosages used in parenteral studies. Other ayahuasca studies, employing *P. harmala* or the carbolines themselves, with xenobiotic tryptamines (other than the natural DMT and 5-MeO-DMT) are tucked away in the recipe part of this volume.

A small scattering of reports exist in the evaluation of ayahuasca mixtures using *P. harmala* as the deaminase inhibitor and plants or plant extracts as the DMT source. This is probably one of the most "pure" of the ayahuasca analogue studies in that it is truly a mixture of plants as in the prototypic vegetal, but it has been little studied. In most cases the inhibitor is the staunch standby, *P. harmala*, but the other component is any of several reasonably popular *Psychotria viridis* substitutes. In a study with a tea made from actual *P. viridis* leaves, there was a disappointing absence of any effects. Similarly, root bark extracts of *Desmanthus illinoensis* gave modest activity, but when consumed along with grass extracts of the *Phalaris* spp., there was a duplication of the characteristic hoasca magic.

I have been led to believe that if the amount of the inhibitor is adequate (three grams of *P. harmala* seems to be quite enough), then the intensity of the experience depends totally on the amount of the DMT-containing plant that is consumed. It must always be remembered that the alkaloid content of a plant that has been reported to be such-and-such in the scientific literature, can be something entirely different if the botanical material is gathered at different times of the day, the growing cycle, the seed-producing cycle or, for that matter, if it grows on the North or the South side of the hill. If a lot of DMT goes in, in the ayahuasca trial, and there is an adequate amount of the inhibitor on board, the experience can be

extraordinary and quite frightening.

Let me quote at some length from a plant/plant combination experience that I heard about a while ago, which beautifully portrays the agony and the ecstasy of ayahuasca. This follows the consumption of about three grams of *P. harmala* followed with an unknown (but obviously large) quantity of extract from the leaves of the tree, *Acacia phlebophylla*. Look at the world and at reality through the eyes of a young adventurer during the course of about two hours at home, with both the "force" and the "light" guiding him in his quest.

"At 2:15 a.m. on Saturday morning I ingested (rather quickly) a heaped teaspoonful of ground harmala seeds, and I flushed it down with water. Ten minutes later, I drank a cup full of the brew, also rather quickly. Fifteen minutes later things got really, really weird.

"Three of us were sitting in the front room of my house. This is where I kept a spare mattress and all of my musical gear, and it was the furthest room from where my girlfriend was trying to sleep. I was told to get comfortable so I brought in a bean bag from the living room, and I lay on that. I was on the bean bag, describing a dull cramp in my stomach to my friends. I glanced over at the curtains which are a see-through material with a floral pattern. They started moving. The flowers on the curtain seemed as though they were at a different distance from the material itself. They looked different, almost brighter. The Venetian blinds, behind the curtains were breathing. There was no shading, no shadows, no scratches, no texture. Just a single color for every single object.

"The flowers on the curtain were shimmering, the curtains started breathing, and then they flowed down onto the floor, just like the smoke from a spilt bottle of liquid nitrogen flows down stairs. Then the eyes-closed visuals started. I felt that this was about as much as I could handle at that moment, and if the trip stopped there I would have heaps to talk about. But no ....

"I felt vaguely nauseous, and I didn't want to throw up later because I didn't know what to expect: my expectations were exceeded even at this early stage through the trip (it had been only five minutes since the onset of effects). I forced myself to throw up in a clear Tupperware container thing. I was beginning to hallucinate strongly, and had lost the ability to distinguish between visuals



experienced with the eyes closed and those with the eyes open. I didn't know what I was doing at the time. I felt some bowel movement, and asked if I had defecated. Apparently I was OK, but I thought it'd probably be best if I went to the toilet, 'just in case.'

"Things went up a level. It was no longer my house I was in. I was walking down some hallway thingy but I didn't know where any of the doors led to. Someone must have gotten to the bathroom before me because the light was on, but I went in there anyway. I was now experiencing full on hallucinations, but I didn't think it was a case of bad timing and I didn't attempt to abort the toilet visit. I had no sense of time at all. The bathroom certainly wasn't mine. Yes, there was a basin, and a bathtub, and there was also a strange door that someone opened for me. I was only vaguely aware that I had to do something here. The hallucinations were pretty heavy before I sat down, somehow I managed to unzip myself and to drop my trousers, and sit down. Then the universe changed ...

"I left my body sitting on the toilet and was thrown into a universe where nothing seemed to make any sense. The eyes-closed visuals were absolutely outstanding, freeforming, morphing from one complex scene to another. I went through huge sliding doors, traveled in space vehicles, saw incredibly complex and insane roads and highways, floating through space I could never fully describe. Beings were present, gray munchkin-like things with yellow stripes, and there were snake objects too. And, especially, eyes. Peeking out of every bend in the road, off every snake, under every door. They didn't frighten me. I was just curious to know what they all were doing, and what they all were seeing.

"These visuals came on with such an incredible intensity it was simply neuronically impossible to process all of them. I remember thinking that nothing made sense, so I must've analyzed these images at one point, although I can never remember specifically doing so. The colors for my eye-closed visuals remained the same throughout all the trip; striking pinks, gray, vivid yellows, deep dark blues, purple, red. All tones had terrific contrast. There were no 'boring colors;' colors seemed to be like some weird arcade game.

"My 'field of vision' had significantly changed too.

In the normal state I can usually only look at one thing at a time, but now my field of vision had become an entire hemisphere, and my body (rather, my being) became a point in this crazy universe. The point didn't have a body, it just floated around in this virtual brain space. I could accept input from this visual hemisphere, but there was no way I could ever come close to processing it. It was just too fast, too complex, and too intense.

"In the meantime, my body was trying to have a shit. I don't know if that eventually happened, but I thought I would give myself a wipe anyway. I turned to where I thought the toilet paper was, on the right, and the Valhalla poster was on the left. What a mess. There were these letter things all over it, and I could see the words, but I couldn't read. I couldn't attach any meaning to the lettery things. Directly in front of me was a blank, white wall. I stared at this for a while but I cannot remember what I saw. I finally got to the toilet paper, but couldn't find the end of the roll. I grabbed it, clawed at it, but it felt like smoke. I eventually managed to grab a fistful, and looking down at my hand I couldn't see anything, but I knew I had the paper. I managed to wipe somehow, and while glancing down I noticed that my legs had disappeared. Oh, no, it's OK. There they are. No, they're gone again. How am I supposed to wipe when everything keeps disappearing. Somehow my hand completed the task. I don't remember standing up, zipping up, washing my hands or anything like that. But I remember telling the guys that I wanted my favorite chair. Somehow I ended up seated in it. I had somehow ended up with a clean bucket in my lap, so I didn't have to worry about throwing up on my self.

"I didn't have anything to throw up. I hadn't eaten anything since 1 p.m. on Friday, and it is now 3 a.m. on Saturday. And the morning's experience started at 2:40 a.m., just twenty minutes ago!

"After a little while the visuals started to decrease in intensity, and I tried communicating with my babysitter. We mainly giggled a lot, and we seemed to spend more time actually working out if we could communicate than actually communicating. We were both going to be OK. I occasionally tried to keep my own checks on my body. One of the hardest things was actually trying to

figure out if I was breathing. There was a vague sound somewhere that sounded familiar. Audio was basically annoying — there was no correlation between the audio and the visuals. Taste was not there (I couldn't taste the vomit), smell likewise, and I couldn't feel anything. But there was endless 'visual noise' that was continuously confusing. Seashell noise. Everything looked as if it were made of a flexible membrane (single color, of course) and there were all these moving seashells underneath the surface.

"The visuals themselves were very, very geometric, although like nothing ever constructed by humans before. But throughout the whole thing, not a single element of chaos. No fractals, nothing irregular. Everything perfect and geometric. I wonder what it would be like to see a tree under DMT? Being a fractal person, I'm doing the next trip during the day, where I can try and interpret nature.

"Nothing short of the most amazing and intense experience of my life to date."

This was an extremely long experience that lasted less than two hours. This abbreviated version of the complete report is a rich introduction to the complexities of DMT, the light of the hoasca, that can become apparent with the expression of a material that is protected from the body's urges to destroy it quickly.

A final comment. I was asked recently by a person in law enforcement to give him a definition of just what the term "ayahuasca" stood for, since it apparently had been encountered in connection with some drug-related incident. I wrote the following short essay, which was published in a journal called CLIC, and is reproduced here with permission.

### AYAHUASCA

Until recently, the term "Ayahuasca" was seldom seen or heard outside of reports that originated in the Amazon basin. This plant decoction has found wide use throughout northern South America in healing, prophesy, initiation, and as a sensory intoxicant. Depending upon its area of origin, it has also been called caapi, natema, or yaje.

In the last decade or two, it has appeared more and more frequently in non-Indian settings. It has become a

component of a religious movement in Brazil, and it is provoking broad curiosity in Europe and in the United States.

Its composition is extremely variable, depending upon the personal choice of the curandero-shaman-healer-practitioner-physician who prepares it. It can be composed entirely of plant materials, or of synthetic compounds, or of combinations from both sources. Invariably, ayahuasca is a mixture of two components. One is an enzyme inhibitor, a factor that will block the deamination of an amine. The other is the amine that is protected from metabolic destruction. As a rule, neither component is particularly active alone, orally, but in combination the deamination inhibitor allows the amine to show oral activity.

The monoamineoxidase inhibitor can be from plant sources, or it can be an appropriate pharmaceutical agent. The chemicals that are usually found in the plant products are harmine, harmaline, or tetrahydroharmine, all 7-methoxy-beta-carbolines. In the Amazon, plants of the *Banisteriopsis* Genus are common, including species such as *B. caapi* or *B. inebrians*. In Europe and the Southern United States and Mexico, one can find several species related to *Peganum harmala*, or Syrian Rue, being used as a source of these carbolines. The positional isomers, 6-methoxyharman and its hydrogenation products, have also been employed in this enzyme inhibitory role. Even prescribable antidepressant MAOI drugs such as tranylcypromine (Parnate) have been used in this role of activator.

The amine being allowed oral availability by this deaminase activity can be from an even wider collection of sources. The simplest tryptamines such as N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) or 5-methoxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine (5-MeO-DMT) are common. There are many plants that have been used for this component. The extracts of the leaves of *Psychotria*, a shrub of Amazonian origin but now found throughout the world, are active and often employed. Acacia species from Australia (the Wattle tree) or China, the snuff sources derived from *Anadenanthera*, the roots of *Mimosa hostilis* or from grasses found in the midwest, the various Virola bark

resins from the Amazon, or even from the poison glands of the *Bufo alvarius* frogs of the Southwest, all contain tryptamine alkaloids that become orally active when mixed with a MAOI companion.

But the amine being protected from metabolic destruction can be from many other sources. I know of mushroom extracts, some of the *Psilocybe* line, some from *Amanita*, some from *Inocybe*, that have been used. There can be extracts of plants of the Solonaceae, the *Datura* group, or belladonna, henbane, or mandrake, or extracts of the *Brugmansia* that are the South American relatives of the *Datura*. Here, the active agents are atropine and scopolamine. Although many of these amines are quite active by themselves, they have nonetheless been explored as the "second half" of the ayahuasca.

Most often, the patient/recipient has no idea of the composition of the ayahuasca brew. If these are plants, their identities might be uncertain due to the use of native names. Even the person who assembles and provides the active mixture might be unable to accurately acknowledge its components, as he may be using extracts and concentrates of plants of unknown origins.

Thus, ayahuasca can be a capricious combination of either plant extracts or specific compounds. It can be encountered as a viscous oil that can vary from amber in color to tarry black. It is neither consistent in composition, nor is it reproducible as to pharmacological activity. An illicit drug may be present in a given sample (DMT, psilocybin, or possibly bufotenine) but these explicitly scheduled drugs may not be there at all. Most exhibits will be complex mixtures that will be challenging to analyze.

This brief introduction to the area, just cited above, was written for an audience that would be largely forensic chemists, so I emphasized the uncertainties and complexities that might be encountered in their laboratory work. Perhaps this broad and somewhat diffuse definition might provide a bit more time for these religious and spiritual seeds to germinate in the United States. And a bit more time to learn the remarkable world that can be revealed from within ourselves.

To me, there is something of great potential value in these particular tools, and I would like to see research with it get started and flourish.

## CHAPTER 17. MGS

(Shura's voice)

I pride myself on being pretty much up to speed concerning the plant sources for psychedelic drugs. But morning glory seeds were an item that took me completely by surprise. Oh, the scientific papers were there in the older literature — in fact, one of the earliest was a short report published in 1941 by Richard Schultes, describing the use of the seeds of a morning glory by Mexican Indian groups following a tradition that dated back to Aztec time. This was the plant *Rivea corymbosa* or *Turbina corymbosa*, and the seeds were called *ololiuqui*. A couple of decades later, another report appeared in a Mexican anthropological journal, of a similar plant with a similar action. This was another morning glory which had seeds called "tlitliltzen" by the Aztecs. The botanical binomial for this plant was *Ipomoea violacea* or *I. tricolor*.

I do not read either the monographs from the Botanical Museum of Harvard University, or the Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Antropológicas de México with any regularity. But part of my daily reading ritual does include the San Francisco Chronicle, and this of course included the daily offering of the columnist, Herb Caen.

It was over my morning coffee, in 1963, that I was captivated by a column devoted to a pile of rumors that involved the latest drug in the San Francisco scene, MGS. During World War II there was a vigorous cigarette advertising promotion for Lucky Strikes that exploited the change of package color from green to white. It went, "Lucky Strike green has gone to war." After the war, this dropped away, but there appeared the slogan, LS/MFT, or Lucky Strikes Means Fine Tobacco. And the caption that caught my eye in the Herb Caen column was, LS/MGS. Apparently, the real swingers (so the column said) were abandoning peyote and LSD, in favor of chewing a hundred morning glory seeds. People were ordering 25 lb. sacks of seeds from whomever sold them. In the middle of May, 1963, a vice president of a major supplier, the Ferry Morse Seed Company, began

to get suspicious. Although morning glory seeds were one of their five most popular items, he said, their sales had leapt to 50 times normal. The three most sought-after varieties had the unbelievable names, Heavenly Blue, Pearly Gates, and Flying Saucers.

Suppliers quickly removed the seeds from the market with the explanation, "We want to be sure." The state narcotics chief said that it was just a rumor. A spokesman from the FDA said that he didn't think there was anything to it but he remembered that, as a kid, he had been told never to chew on morning glory seeds. The medical director of the Menlo Park International Foundation for Advanced Study reported the experiences of test subjects, with 50 to 500 seeds each, lasting five to eight hours. The FDA started their own investigation, and there was the suggestion that this could prompt Congressional action: an anti-morning glory seed bill.

Were these reports all valid? Yes, they were. The most remarkable chemist Albert Hofmann, the ergot expert who was the first to synthesize LSD and to eventually discover its activity, undertook the challenge of exploring the seeds of the morning glories and he discovered, to his amazement, that they contained alkaloids that were previously known only amongst the ergot fungi. The presence of these complex alkaloids (widely believed to be unique to the ergot world) in higher plants such as these Convolvulaceae, was initially disbelieved. It was suggested that since there certainly were all sorts of fungal ergots adrift in Hofmann's lab, there obviously had to have been some cross-contamination. But others found the same results and this remarkable parallel between the lowly fungus and the pretty sophisticated plants (from the botanical point of view) proved to be correct.

Everyone climbed on the bandwagon, and there was a wealth of publications in the 60's. The scientists wanted to pursue the holy grail by finding new morning glory plants and new components, but at the same time they had to distance themselves from the reality that these plants were pharmacological turn-ons. One of my most cherished quotes comes from a paper published in 1966, sponsored by the NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health, of the U.S. Department of Health) which informed the scientific community that, "Law enforcement officers and garden seed companies in the United States have recently become concerned because of reports in the lay press that students, psychologists and maladapted persons of Bohemian habits ('beatniks') were ingesting seeds of cultivated morning glories sold in garden supply shops." They spoke of suicide attempts, and severe reactions with dosages of 250 seeds that required hospitalization. There was fear that a potentially dangerous psychoactive drug abuse problem might be arising in the United States.

They were probably quite correct. There has been an ever increas-

ing volume of questions and answers on the internet over the last few years, with interest focused on these morning glory plants. "Where do the seeds come from?" "What are their names?" "How many do I use?" "How do I prepare them?" "What sort of effects should I expect?" I am again confronted with my classical dilemma: how do I present my scattered notes and thoughts to make them most useful when there is no obvious organizational structure? Should I organize the sources as botanical individuals (which fits with native use) or as chemical individuals which might be responsible for the biological activity? Either choice will offend the purists in the other camp. So let me start with the plant, which will allow a little of the componentry to be listed and perhaps associated with the action of the whole entity, and then let me bring together some of the potential active components, the "usual suspects," which might contribute to the overall effects. These issues are far from being resolved; they will never be resolved. The plants will be in part defined by the compounds within them, and these very compounds will be used to identify the plants that contain them. There will never be an acceptable hierarchy of ordering.

The plant that started all of this notoriety was *Rivea corymbosa* (or *Turbina corymbosa* or *Ipomoea sidaefolia*). The Nahuatl name for the plant in Mexico is "coaxihuitl" (the snake plant) and they called the seeds ololuiqui (small round things). They are small and spherical, brown colored, and they appear one to a capsule. The Zapotec name for them is "badoh." This was the first of this botanical group to be analyzed for its alkaloid content, which proved to be only a fraction of that of the tlitliltzen group mentioned below, and contained levels that measured some 0.01% by weight in the fresh seeds.

There is the second morning glory with the botanical name of *Ipomoea violacea* (or *I. tricolor* or *I. rubrocaerulea*). It has large five-petaled blossoms that last just one day before changing into a seed capsule that contains three seeds. These are black, rice-grain sized, with a distinct tapering bulge towards one end. The Zapotec name for them is "badoh negro" and the Aztec name, tlitliltzen, means "little black one." It takes about 25 seeds to weigh a gram, and the alkaloid content of the fresh seeds, by weight, runs between 0.02 and 0.10 %.

There was a third morning glory that came into popular notoriety a couple of years later. This was the Hawaiian baby wood rose known botanically as *Argyreia nervosa*. Although there is no shamanic reputation for this plant in the history of Mexican native use, there certainly developed quite a notoriety in our own western culture. My first encounter with this plant was at the opening of a new Standard Oil gas station in Berkeley, where each customer was given a small bouquet of dried flowers as a thank you for coming by and buying gas on the first day of business. The flower?



A bunch of hard, wood-like blossoms called wood roses. Here the seeds are larger than those of the usual morning glories; they are four to a capsule, running perhaps 10 seeds to the gram. They have an alkaloid content of up to almost 1%. Thus they are perhaps one or two dozen times more potent on a per-seed basis than the *Ipomoea* and *Rivea* species mentioned above. A second wood rose is a pharmacological disappointment, the just plain Hawaiian wood rose, *Ipomoea tuberosa*. The seeds of this beautiful flower are immensely larger, over a gram apiece, but they are devoid of alkaloids.

How active are the seeds pharmacologically? There is a small scattering of somewhat objective reports in the early medical literature, and a vast outpouring over the last few years of completely subjective anecdotal reports from the internet. The medical reports usually involved a hundred or more of either the badoh or the badoh negro seeds, and usually described effects that covered the range from apathy and listlessness, to increased visual sensitivity, to a feeling of well being, to no effect at all. Even with dosages up to 300 seeds there were very few positive effects reported, usually only sedation and nausea. Isolated extracts of the seeds (2 milligrams of the extract) led to some alterations of color perception and the appearance of objects, and a generalized dreamy state. In the more recent popular reports, quite often there are effective efforts made to extract the alkaloids from the raw plant material, to lessen the gastric distress that reflects the massive amount of plant material that is consumed.

What is in these seeds that makes them psychoactive? The major alkaloidal components in most of the seeds are the two isomeric amides of lysergic acid, lysergamide (ergine, LAA, LA-111) and isolysergamide (isoergine, iso-LAA). They represent perhaps a half of the alkaloid content of the two badoh's and they are a smaller but sizable component of the baby wood rose. It has been found that the acetaldehyde adduct of these two amides, the N-(1-hydroxyethylamides) accounts for some of the isolated ergines, as this material is quite unstable and is easily converted in the process of isolation. The only other amide of lysergic acid that is present in these plants is ergometrine. All of these are known to have activity in man, and they are specifically described in the commentary located in the LSD recipe in the second half of this volume.

The four lesser alkaloids that are present are all alcohols, reflecting the reduction of the acid group of lysergic acid. The primary reduction product is elymoclavine and the isomer with the double bond moved into conjugation with the aromatic ring is lysergol. This can further hydroxylate to provide penniclavine. And the complete opening of the fourth "D" ring yields chanoclavine. A number of trace alkaloids are also known.

What are the virtues and what are the risks associated with the exploration of morning glories and their contents? The virtues are many,

both as a natural intoxicant with an ancient history of use in the traditions of shamanism and spirituality, and as a raw material source of ergot alkaloids. Historically, there is a rich lore of medical and religious value that has been part of the Meso-American culture for many generations.

As far as the raw material aspect is concerned, it must be noted that some of the alkaloids that are present are of nuisance value only, as they are chemical modifications of lysergic acid. These are the alcohols and open ring compounds with intriguing structures in their own rights, but they cannot be brought around into anything of immediate value by easy synthetic manipulation. The major alkaloids are, however, the amides of lysergic acid and of isolysergic acid, and the fragile 1-hydroxyethylamide precursors to them. All these are of interest as themselves, being psychoactive in different ways to different people.

A second value is that all these will hydrolyze to the corresponding lysergic acids (LA and iso-LA) with strong base treatment. This mixture is the immediate synthetic precursor to the mixture of LSD and iso-LSD which, on chromatographic fractionation, will provide LSD itself. To be able to go from the local nursery, in two steps and one fractionation, to LSD, would certainly appear to be a virtue to some people.

The risks? They are also very worthy of caution. It must always be remembered that these chemicals are ergot alkaloids, and as such have profound effects on the uterus and can be extremely damaging to hormonal balance. The history of ergotism is well known, both as to the gangrenous and the convulsive possibilities. Probably the single most dangerous aspect of the isolates from the morning glory seeds is the fact that both lysergamide (ergine, the natural alkaloid present) and lysergic acid (the hydrolysis product of it mentioned above) are Schedule III drugs according to the present listings in the Controlled Substance Act (see Appendix B).

The continuum from innocent behavior to criminal behavior is relatively undefined and must be viewed through the eyes of someone who may not approve of your behavior. One should visualize a sequence, the stations of the psychedelic intent so to speak. It starts with the possession of a package of Flying Saucer seeds, and progresses to an isolate of those seeds, to a hydrolysate of that isolate, to a coupling of that hydrolysate to diethylamine, to a separation of the resulting mixture into two components, one of which is LSD. This is a transition from total innocence to felonious behavior. The law is vague. The enforcement of it is capricious and usually harsh. Intent to commit a crime is today itself a crime, even if no overt act has been made. If you involve a buddy, there are equally punitive conspiracy laws.

I had a dear friend who always traveled in his car with a pocket full of nasturtium seeds. Anywhere he would see a pile of garbage alongside the

road, or an ugly ditch or perhaps a barren mud slide, he would throw a handful of seeds there, and he knew that next year the eyesore might well be a little less ugly as it would be a mass of nasturtium leaves and blossoms. Maybe somewhere there is a Johnny Ipomoea seed scatterer. His fifty pound gunny sack of morning glory seeds is dedicated to environmental reconstruction. If you were to ask him, "Do you use these as a drug?" He would say, "Drugs? Moi? You've got to be kidding. I'm just into growin' flowers."

# Part Four:

## Time and Transformation

## CHAPTER 18. WHAT BIG BANG?

(Shura's voice)

Sometimes when I am working late in my laboratory I have problems finding an OK radio station. On KNBC, at 740, there is a continuing reiteration of the day's news which I hear repeated almost verbatim every few hours, and I lose interest. And then, up the dial a little bit, I find Morten W. on KGO at 810. He is a knowledgeable scientist explaining such weird stuff as, for example, why green water is coming out of the water pipes over in Danville. He always explains such things well, but with a tone of superiority and arrogance that I find humorous rather than impressive. But when I go from 740 to 810, I pass a station at 770 or 780 that is devoted to the Bible and Christian fundamentalism, and finding that has proven to be a total treasure. A stanza that I learned in childhood comes to mind, "Whenever I go to Severn along the Erie Tract, I pass by a poor old farmhouse whose shingles are broken and black." This religious farmhouse on the way to KGO along the AM dial is often my retreat from the boredom of both replayed news and omniscience.

It is here that I have learned much of what I know about creationism. Most of the speakers hold to the seven-day model of Genesis, a week of God's work, ending with an earth, the sun and, for all I can tell, the rest of the universe. Since this is the text of the Bible, and the Bible is the word of God, it serves well as a *fait accompli* explanation of our origins. Given the premise of divine origin, everything holds together remarkably well. Oh, there are a few things that are awkward, such as fossil records and partially decayed radioactivity, but if you accept the cosmology of creationism, then you can find ways of accepting and living with its troublesome contradictions. Once the shift is made from a process of reason to one of faith, everything can be made to fit your thesis. Things such as dinosaurs and uranium, things that give the illusion of ancient times, are also the products of that busy week, and all were the handiwork of the Creator.

Those who see themselves as being scientifically sophisticated will

smile with patient and quiet amusement upon those whom they see as present-day champions of a Middle Ages philosophy. Those who wish to enter into a dialogue will support their arguments with the hard, cold facts of science, the rewards gained from the application of the "scientific method." And the creationists quite rightly argue back, that these scientists are defending their positions with the same blend of theory and observation that they themselves employ. Neither camp will gracefully admit that there are many embarrassing observations that are being ignored. In my lecturing at Berkeley, I enjoy the disruption that will inevitably follow some off-hand comment I might make concerning the arguments that favor the one-week origin that took place some maybe ten thousand years ago.

As a person who identifies himself with the scientist side rather than the creationist side of this polemic, I find myself quite irritated when I hear the theory of the big bang being accepted by the scientific community as an item of faith. This is the current myth in vogue that deals with the origin of the universe. One of the most predictable questions each of us has asked of our elders, at one time or another in our youth, is, "Where did I come from?" As individuals we cannot remember back to our birth — our memories are sadly incomplete and we seek the input from others who may fill in the details. As a species we ask the same question over an immensely broader time base, "Where did we come from? Was there a beginning? What was there before that?"

Embarrassing stuff, here, since there is no available parent to help us find answers when the question is asked in cosmological terms. The religious fundamentalist says, God created us all out of his infinite good will, in early March, 8065 B.C. Or thereabouts. The learned astrophysicist says the big bang created us all in late September, 14.3 billion years B.C. Or thereabouts. There is no record of this event that is unambiguous, so the acceptance of the big bang myth is every bit as much an act of faith as is the acceptance of the Genesis myth. To keep things in perspective, I should capitalize Big Bang so that it looks as important as God.

Not that I want to knock God. As this fun essay progresses, I hope to offer an alternative to the concept of origin. There might have been no origin. Our universe has always been here, it is infinitely old, and so God just might have been with us much longer than anyone ever suspected. All the weird observations that are part of our science will fit another explanation just as well, or even better, but the veil of prejudice must be put aside for a moment for us to see it. More of this iconoclasm later.

Let me paint a brief word picture of the Big Bang religion first, using the vocabulary of the faithful. We have interpreted the evidence from our instruments to support a theory that the universe is expanding, and expanding at a remarkably rapid rate. And the further away something is, the

faster it is moving away from us. This is our way of being at peace with the observation that the further away a light source is, the more the spectrum of that light is shifted to the red. This relationship, between how far away the light emitter is from us, and the red shift of the light emitted, is called the Hubble constant. The resemblance between this dynamic picture and an explosion has provided us an irresistible model for the origin of our universe. This is portrayed as a super explosion, and what we see now is the debris, the shards and fragments, still flying away in every direction. With this model in front of us, let us pretend that we can watch the passing of time in the reverse direction. Let's run the movie projector backwards. Each frame takes you to an earlier point in time, so that the flying fragments appear to be coming together again, with the volume of the universe getting progressively smaller and the matter (or whatever it is) that is in it getting progressively hotter. As the film continues to roll backwards, everything appears to condense to a smaller and smaller volume, and then even this shrinks further to what looks like a point and that point is so hot that matter can't even exist at all. Stop the projector right there. Look at that birth frame. If you closely inspect the image before you, you should see an extremely small something, at a temperature of a fantastically large number of degrees centigrade. The movie is said to have started from this point in the normal time direction and that is what the physicists call the Big Bang. From that minuscule source came all the stuff that constitutes this universe: the energy, the eventual mass, the stars and the galaxies, the forces of gravity and of life.

I recently read a review by Rem B. Edwards (published in the *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*) of a book written by two physicists, who argued as to whether the Big Bang cosmology provided evidence for the existence of God. It stated that both authors agreed that our universe emerged as a cataclysmic explosion from an initial singularity, understood in contemporary astrophysics as a state in which the mass/energy of the universe is condensed into an infinitely dense, infinitely hot, infinitely small (zero diameter), infinitely curved, pointlike dimension. If those were the true dimensions of our origin as shown on that birth frame, then even if that "cataclysmic explosion" were to increase that original diameter a zillion-fold it would still be zero, if the temperature were to drop a zillion-fold, it would still be infinite. Anything times zero is still zero. Infinity divided by anything is still infinity. In short, the second frame, and the thousandth frame of our movie would appear identical to the first one, and there would be no stars or galaxies. We would not exist.

But here is the faith aspect of this particular cosmological religion. Look at that one frame again, the first frame with the very small speck that is so very hot, and ask to look at the frame that immediately precedes it. To

make that request is to immediately offend all the anticreationists, and you will find yourself confronted by an army of the astronomically faithful who will leap to the defense of their theory.

The question has no meaning, some will say. According to Stephen Hawking, "That is like asking what lies five miles North of the North Pole." Others will talk about singularities involving unbelievably large accumulations of mass produced from some form of a black hole environment where the rules of light and energy are nonexistent and there is no meaning to time. "Without the passage of time, there is no meaning to the word 'before'." But, you say, if there is no before, and there is no time, then nothing can get started and there can be no after. And furthermore, you can't have it both ways. If all is energy, and energy is mass, then you would have nothing but a single black hole, and there could be no way to "Big Bang" your way out of it. If time can't move, then the film can't be run either way. But if the mass equivalency doesn't apply, there can be no black hole, and you can't invoke your time suspension rules, and our movie frames can indeed be viewed in sequence. But the devotees of quantum mechanics will say, oh yes, you can indeed have it both ways, because both extremes are really expressions of the same state. But this still avoids the origin question. From whence? What lit the fuse? Who said, "Let the games begin." Listen carefully and you just might hear someone speak the name so frequently invoked by the biblical creationists: God.

So the Big Bang is presented within our present day science as a miracle, nothing more and nothing less. It is a pleasure to watch the contortions that our revered scientists go through in their compulsion to fit all observations into a theory that will support, or at least be at peace with, this Big Bang miracle.

One of the most amusing examples involves the determination of the presence of a background radiation that is uniform in all directions in the heavens. Some few years ago a couple of scientists, at Bell Laboratories as I remember, received the Nobel Prize for the discovery that there was an absolutely uniform level of radiation to be found in the sky, regardless of which direction you happen to look. Homeostasis. A flat, constant coldness at around 3° Kelvin. The fact that it was both smooth and exactly the same in every direction was the killer observation that finally provided the ultimate proof of the Big Bang origin of the universe. Or so they said. And then, a few years later, some super detectors were put up in orbit with orders of magnitude greater sensitivity. You know what they observed? That flat background radiation wasn't really flat, but had undulations and unevennesses in it. The fact that it was, in its fine detail, uneven and variable was then advanced as the ultimate proof of the Big Bang.

Examples abound of the capitulation of the scientific community to



this canonical cop-out. Two recent articles appeared in the local San Francisco Chronicle that are superb illustrations of this mind set.

On March 4, 1995, there was reported the discovery of the sixth and last quark, the top quark. I do not wish to detract in any way from the beautiful story of fundamental particles, the various forces, the laws of physics and all the related entities that are the ultimate building blocks and operative rules of the matter that constitute the universe. I'm all for chemistry, and physics, and thermodynamics and quantum mechanics. They are real; they are essential; they are inescapable. What I am against is the blind attachment of everything to the Big Bang nonsense. Let me make a parallel between the biased reporting that is so much in vogue now (let's call it Big Bang Bias, or BBB), and how it might have been phrased in non-biased language (called IOU for Infinitely Old Universe), in the matter of this quark report.

BBB "Scientists have managed to isolate a bit of matter providing a major clue to the origin and evolution of the universe."

IOU "Scientists have managed to isolate a bit of matter providing a major clue to the structure of the universe."

BBB "Quarks vanished as independent entities at the very beginning of time when the original Big Bang that created the universe began to cool."

IOU "Quarks have never before existed as independent entities, as the extreme conditions of heat and energy needed to release them are not known in nature."

BBB "... have found the missing link in our theoretical model that tries to understand how the universe evolved from its birth."

IOU "... have found the missing link in our theoretical model that tries to understand what the universe is and of what it is made."

The article has a climax sentence that is directly comparable to the Catholic Church's Sunday mass. "In the instant of the Big Bang the universe was a soup of quarks and leptons and radiation, but then as the universe cooled down in seconds and minutes, and as its temperature cooled to 2,000 trillion degrees, it lost its quarks." That one I cannot paraphrase, although the expression "lost its marbles" is very tempting. As I would with the personal viewing of the second coming of Christ, I must rest in awe of

2,000 trillion degrees temperature.

My dear wife Alice uses the term "factoid" to represent something that is accurate and totally trivial. Big numbers, certainly those that I lump together under the term zillion which I have used a couple of times already in this chapter, certainly fit into this classification. Just how big is a trillion? The American system is based on the old French system. But the French recently changed their system to correspond to the German and British systems, so again we stand alone. Since this is, both figuratively and literally, a hot topic, let me continue this trivial aside. Going up in factors of one thousand, there is:

how many zeros	American	British
3	thousand	thousand
6	million	million
9	billion	milliard
12	trillion	billion
15	quadrillion	thousand billion
18	quintillion	trillion

and with *a* little etymological looseness, in either country;

with a lot of them	zillion
with a 100 of them	googol
with a googol of them	googolplex

So, is that the American one thousand million equals a billion world, or the British one million million equals a billion world? This is important. It is, incontestably, the difference between 2,000,000,000,000,000 °C and 2,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 °C. Or with the addition of 273 degrees as minor correction, you get °K (Kelvin), the thermometer preferred by physical scientists. And since the mythology claims that it was at this moment of cooling that the quarks all went out to lunch, never to be seen again, it becomes a crucial point in the cosmic history. The new article concludes: "The Standard Model is correct when it describes the fundamental particles and forces of the universe — and that science is on the right track." I am strangely not convinced.

A second article appeared, in the same paper, exactly five months later, to the day. There were presented some recent findings from the Hubble telescope that, if taken as being correct, deal a killing blow to the Big Bang theory. The essence and the irony can be seen in a single paragraph from this report:

"The basic theory of cosmology, that the universe burst forth in a Big Bang from a tiny volume long ago, remains intact. But the details must be revised, or explanations of stellar physics changed, to get stars older than the universe."

Let me sum up the paradox in a single sentence. The astronomers are finding 16 billion year-old globular clusters in an 8 billion year-old universe. Note the rigid, blind adherence of the faithful in that above paragraph, "The basic theory of the Big Bang ... remains intact." How do the true believers get out of this most recent contradiction? There were other embarrassing details accumulating. Most of them use terms and vocabulary that I cannot even pretend to understand. Terms such as Grand Unified Theory, magnetic monopoles, anti-matter, domain walls, symmetry breaking, Higgs fields, all led to a single, very disturbing contradiction to the Big Bang model. The time scale was all screwed up. Everyone had always looked at the early seconds of this event. But when you got into the very, very early pictures, an early microscopic fraction of a second immediately following this moment of ultimate origin, things didn't make sense. If the mass was what they said the mass had to be, then the whole shooting match would have fallen back upon itself, collapsed into some revisitation of the original point of origin, a Big Crunch, a singularity to end all singularities, or maybe even a black hole, in a few tens of thousands of years. But it didn't. Here we are, not thousands or millions, but billions of years later (in the American, not the British sense), and we are not yet sure, even today, if we are closed (some day to recollapse), open (or forever expanding to infinity) or magically neutral (on to a point of ultimate balance). Something new was needed to maintain the faith.

Inflation was found. By ignoring the rules of physics for a millionth of a millionth of a millionth of a second (I kid you not) just after the incredibly dense, incredibly hot Big Bang went off, you have to allow the exploding thing to expand at  $10^{25}$  times the speed of light (some suggest maybe  $10^{50}$  times as fast) to achieve the organization and the mass distribution needed to accommodate the galaxies and the big attractors as we know them today. The rewards of this sleight-of-hand are many — atomic ratios are reasonable now, as are some of the questions as to anti-matter — and include, most importantly, an effective insulation from having to address the questions of just what that preinflation world really looked like. By the very act of inflation all earlier records have been lost.

So here a second miracle is needed to explain the universe. A neat article appeared in the journal "The Sciences" some twenty or thirty years ago, giving about fifteen criteria for determining if the author of some

extraordinary discovery was a genius or a crack-pot. A few years ago a couple of well known scientists somewhere in the U.S. made a claim of having observed room-temperature fusion. I applied these criteria to their reports and about twelve of them failed. The impossibility of applying experimental challenges to the Big Bang makes this test largely pointless, but one criterion I remember very clearly: "Is there more than one miracle being claimed?" There is the first miracle — a small, dense, hot thing that came from nowhere and started our clock. And now, to justify that first one, we have to have a second miracle — a magical suspension of the laws of physics for a while so that everything can expand at a zillion times the speed of light. Two is one too many.

What a wealth of richness in vocabulary and esoteric thought has now become available to us, from this Big Bang affair. In fairness I will admit that I am not sufficiently in the know to follow the jargon of this new-age science, but let me quote one example to give you the music. This is from a chapter in a text-book entitled *The New Physics* as part of the explanation of the inflation concept:

"The most peculiar property of the false vacuum is probably its pressure, which is both large and negative."

And it just might be that the groundwork is being laid for a third miracle, to address the question of just how stars can be older than the age of the universe. Cosmologist Hogan of the University of Washington suggests that the most likely way is to:

"... drastically change the way the age of the universe is calculated. Among the possibilities are that the universe is far less massive than the experts believe, so that its gravity has barely slowed it down since the Big Bang, or that some strange anti-gravity force ... has actually accelerated its growth over time."

How much simpler life would be if we just dropped the concept of the Big Bang, and the insistence upon there being a point of origin. Rather than continue a search for a beginning, simply assume that everything has always been here. And rather than fret over when it all might crunch, simply assume that everything will always remain here. Our space and cosmos has been around forever, and will stay with us forever.

Something in this direction was proposed by the Hoyle group some years ago, invoking the continuing generation of mass to account for the retreating of the outermost limits. But still there is the embodied

assumption that there is expansion (the red shift observations) and thus some earlier time there was something smaller, and hence (at some time in the past) maybe there was an origin.

To me, there is a fine alternative explanation of what we are and why we appear as we do (universe-wise) with the simple replacement of one assumption with another. A lot of bizarre inconsistencies suddenly become quite reasonable. The assumption to be discarded: the idea that there was a Big Bang with a zillion degrees of temperature in a tiny location somewhere, and that it came from nowhere. The assumption to be accepted in its place: the idea that time is continuously speeding up, and that newly emitted photons move faster than older photons.

I will elaborate fully on just one point of this IOU hypothesis, the Infinitely Old Universe cosmology. This is a consideration of the Hubble constant I mentioned earlier, proposed in the 1920's as a measure of the expansion of the universe, the argument that single-handedly brought the Big Bang theory into being. A good correlation has been established between how far away a star, or galaxy, is from us, and to what extent its light has been shifted towards the red. This is the famous "red-shift" and it has been used for decades both as a measure of the distance of a light source, and the rate of its recession from us. That is the equation that is the Holy Grail of the BBB's, the Big Bang Bias cosmologists; that the distance from us of a light source can be determined with reasonable accuracy by the rate of its recession. The further away, the faster it is receding. Distances are independently determined by a variety of clues, from energies of quasars to the periodicity of certain stars that vary regularly in their brightness. But the dogma is: the further away, the faster the retreat. This shift is akin to the Doppler effect so familiar to us as the change in pitch of the whistle of a train coming towards us, or going away from us. As the approach becomes a retreat, the pitch drops in frequency. The high note WEEE becomes a low note WAAH as the train zips past us in the station with its whistle blaring. Light plays by the same rules, in that if its origin is coming towards us, its frequency is higher (shift to the blue) and if its origin is going away from us, its frequency is lower (shift to the red).

No revision need be made to the distance of stars and galaxies from us, so there is no revision needed as to the apparent size of the universe. They, the energy emitters, are as far away as their red shifts say they are. The point of issue taken here is that the red shift is due to something emitting its photons at a slower time scale, rather than at the same time scale but with the emitter actually moving away from us. They are relatively static as to position, it is just that we are seeing them as they were billions of years ago, functioning on a slower physical time base, and they are not receding at all. Nothing is receding. The universe is what it has been (big)

and what it is now (just about as big) and what it will be a lot of years in the future (still pretty much the same big) except that every year we let pass us by, the bits of energy we emit as photons (in TV broadcasting radio waves and with solar flares from our sun) will be cast in a slightly faster time scale. Our reality is speeding up.

Some one mentioned to me that there was once a cosmic hypothesis that had been called "tired light," but that it had been discredited. That phrase is not in the indices of any of my reference books on the subject, and maybe this is a repetition of that idea. I would love to know just what it implied, and especially just how it became discredited.

Subjectively all of us admit this apparent speeding up of time — that things seem to be happening at a faster and faster rate, almost as if time is passing us by. But physically, there is no way of determining any absolute standard. The rate of change is so small, there is no practical way to measure the photon speed of old versus new photons. Bounce them off the mirrors we have left on the moon? They come back to us in seconds, practically virgins. Where do you find old photons, so you can measure their speed? From distant stars of course, and we already know that they are moving on a slower time base, since we already know that they are shifted to the red. The whole concept of an old, really old, universe presents the same self-satisfying supports and reinforcements that the Big Bang and the newly born universe presents. What is rough for one proves to be good for the other, and vice versa.

Suddenly a number of things that seemed to be uncomfortably hurried in the BBB world become quite relaxed in the IOU world. The most obvious of these issues is the question of the origin of life.

The time period allotted for the creation of life, in our current philosophy, is absurdly small. This carries the arguments that presume the origins to be on earth. We have an extraordinarily complex DNA system that encodes the ultimate details of the living organism. It is complex today, and there are indicators that three billion years ago, when the earth was just cooling down enough to support life, it was just as complex. When did it have time to evolve from something simple to something less simple to something as complex as it is today (just as it was back then)? If you accept evolution, then you must assume that we leapt from a zero level (no life) to a ten level (life as we know it today) with the nine level having been reached while the earth was still new and relatively uninhabitable.

This problem can be deferred, but not necessarily solved, by calling upon a second and longer time period. There are the pan-spermia arguments of the Watsons and the McKennas of our time. Life didn't form on earth, but it formed somewhere else, and spores (or some similar sort of seeding material) were cast from these sites of synthesis out upon the vast

stellar reaches, and over the billions of years needed to wander from galaxy A to galaxy B, fluttered down onto earth to successfully root at the time that the earth proved fertile. But doubling the 4 billion year earth life-span to an 8 billion year universe life span might, at best, give us the time to drop to an eight level in the zero to ten time scale in the reckoning of the development of our DNA sophistication. But this gives no grace period for intergalactic travel of the genetic material.

So, what a delightful comfort one can find by considering a third time period proposal for the creation of life. An infinitely old universe, with all the time in the world (literally) to explore the many combinations of molecules (mostly failures, with an occasional success) that would lead us slowly towards our present living structure. There is a glib axiom in mathematics. If something is conceivable, then given infinite time it becomes inevitable. No, I am afraid that is not quite correct. I am sure there are infinite sets that do not contain all possible combinations. This is too severe a claim for nature. But it somehow has a valid ring to it. I have the gut instinct that since life is certainly conceivable, its turning up in an infinitely old universe just might be a pretty common event. And this might be in a lot of places and at a lot of different times. The purists will soften this bravado by arguing that the universe may be infinitely old, but it is not infinitely large, so there are not an infinite number of places available. But I appeal to the knowledgeable physicists amongst you, the readers. To what extent does our confidence that the universe is 10 to some big-number-power grams in mass, rather than being infinite, depend upon our assumption that there was at one time, a Big Bang? And it is true, life may have become extinguished, or may have extinguished itself many, many times, as might ours in time. But the comforting side benefit of this infinitely old universe theory is that it allows us to say with quite a bit of confidence that we are not alone.

Big Bang? *Requiescat in pace.*

## CHAPTER 19. THREE PHOTOGRAPHS

(Shura's voice)

Hollyhock Farm is a young institution located on the Southeastern tip of a Manhattan-sized island smack in the middle of Georgia Straits, between the Canadian mainland and the island of Vancouver. It has been compared with Esalen, an older institution on the Pacific Ocean some hundred miles south of San Francisco and, although there are many differences, there clearly was the image of Esalen in mind during the setting-up of Hollyhock Farm.

There is, each year, a program of meetings and conferences that extends through the summer months. The overlying leitmotif is pretty much New Age, with seminars relating to self-analysis, dream interpretation, personal discovery, and many related topics that always appeal to those with the chop-wood-fetch-water philosophy. And, in keeping with this view and in keeping with the prototype model of Esalen, they raise their own food and set a superb table with few, if any, equals. There are meeting rooms that have been constructed with a hand that shows both skill and taste. There is a lodge with a piano and a fireplace. Private living quarters are Spartan, clean, and quiet. The garden outside the lodge, which clearly provides the bulk of the substance for the kitchen, is also a floral treasure. Even the compost area and the sewage disposal mechanisms have been well thought out and reward anyone who inspects them closely.

Alice and I had arrived on a mid-afternoon in August, 1988, having flown in from Seattle by float-plane. This was her second flight in a small, six-seat plane, and it was not yet a familiar vehicle of transportation for her. The first, ever, trip on such a plane was in connection with our first river rafting experience. This Salmon River adventure required that we get somehow from a metropolis called Boise to a hamlet called Salmon, and the available transportation was a small Cessna plane. As we walked up to it, Alice comforted herself by making it known that she would prefer a window seat. As the plane was only two people wide, she got her wish.



On the other hand, I was invited to sit as co-pilot, as I had years ago managed to put together most of the skills needed to fly a small plane. I allowed myself to indulge in the fantasy game of taking over the controls if I had to (the unexpected heart attack of the pilot who collapses in his seat and the naive passenger who saves everyone). As we flew along just skimming the tops of the Sawtooth Range, I looked for and located every dial and gauge that I needed, except for the carburetor heat control. I asked, and was told, that a fuel injection engine doesn't have one. So I shut up, and passively watched as the pilot picked his teeth with the pointy end of the claw of his removable bridge, and managed the plane with total competence. A smooth landing on the grass runway of the town of Salmon was anticlimactic.

But back to Canada. On one of the last evenings in Hollyhock, I was asked by my host if I would consider giving an additional short lecture, perhaps on the relationship between psychochemistry, time, and the aging process. I immediately confessed that although each of these subjects had been of personal interest to me, I had never thought of tying them all together. Together, the time and aging themes suggested to me an interesting direction to take, without the need to invoke any chemistry at all. I told him I would be happy to give it a try and see what would happen.

The get-together for the talk was quite well attended and went smoothly. As I had to give it a title, I called it "Three Photographs," and organized it using that metaphor. Of course, I didn't actually have any photographs with me, so they had to be drawn with word pictures. And, as I gave the descriptions, it became apparent that there was in fact only a single scene which had been photographed at three different times. I described those photographs in some detail. It was a picture that presented quite a cross-section of people. Some of them were small children in their pre-teens, some were mature adults in their thirties and forties, and yet others were the older folk in their sixties and seventies. A spanning of at least three generations.

In the first picture I was a child who was ten years old. It was taken in the large living room in the home of a close friend of my parents. This friend was a lecturer in the Department of Comparative Linguistics at the University of California and his name was, as best as I can recall from my mother's description, Reico Ratsche. He was an untenured faculty member, he could speak with ease in some sixteen languages, and was completely fluent in six of them. And he had a reputation as a Don Juan, vis-a-vis the unattached other sex. Perhaps even vis-a-vis the attached other sex. In this picture there was a dramatic but unposed central display of the young adults, all gathered together and quite obviously engaged in enthusiastic conversation. It was a beautiful exhibition of the socially

successful. These were the people who were important. I was in the background with a small group of other children of the "successful adults," most of them about my own age. There were two of my cousins, Sally and Terri, and there were the sisters Nadya and Tanya and Olya, and there was Jimmy. We were playing a game of Monopoly on the floor in front of the davenport. And on the far right, there were several grandparents who were the chaperones and the necessary representatives of the older generation. They were the quiet ones who were always there, and who were respected for their genetic input to the group, but somehow never really made any difference in the flow of things. I remember the picture well, in that I had just discovered how to calculate the odds at Monopoly and could take a little advantage of the others of my own age.

Now here was that very same picture but it carried quite a different set of identifiers the next time that I saw it. This was taken at the Gordon Research Conference at Colby College, in New Hampshire, some thirty years later. The backdrop was a collection of brick buildings and green lawns, but in my eyes it was exactly the same picture as the one I had seen much earlier. This time I found myself located amongst the adults in the center, surrounded closely by my scientific peers, and all of us were the ascending stars in the professional world of scientists. I was with those I wished to know better, and who might help me advance into a more influential position in the arena of scientific competition. There were some small kids in the background who appeared to be playing catch with a baseball. They had obviously been required to come here to New London as part of their parents' vacation, but were totally indifferent to the importance of this gathering. And gathered about, not in any way an essential part of the photo, were the oldsters, the old guard, the has-beens, those who were respected for their scientific contributions to the group and who may well have played a major role in the development of this current state of knowledge, but were now bits of history. It is so marvelous that they could come to the meetings, and be complimented for their past contributions. But I was where it was at. I was with my colleagues here who had found the cutting edge of science and technology. The oldsters somehow appeared to be tired and so gray.

And, as I tried to explain to the assembled group, that very same picture was here, yet again, at Hollyhock Farm. An identical photograph, except for minor background details. The same people, and all of them standing in about the same places. There is a group of doers and swingers, those who will uncover new paradigms in science and resounding psychological truths. They will occupy center stage and present the themes and theses which will define the path that must be followed. And yet, earlier tonight, up in the lodge with the piano and the fireplace, I saw a couple of

young children playing a quiet game of chess with perhaps a touch of boredom. They are here because their parents are here. And I stand over to the side, as one of the old people, one of the gray observers, who is both respected and complimented for some seminal contributions to some area, but who is not really part of the current dynamics of creativity or the mainstream of research and development by the young adult movers and shakers who are here. What a fascinating series of photographs, one from Berkeley, one from New England, and one from here in Canada, each and every one the same photograph, and yet in each I see myself first in one role, then in a second, and then a third. The picture does not change. It is my position in the picture that has changed. The innocent, the hero and, finally, the observer.

What an interesting view of the story of man! One always looks to the moving scene—the emergence of a personality, a savior, a villain—and tries to understand the nature of the human animal by observing his birth, his life, and his death. But, maybe the whole world is nothing but a painting by Breugel, with the child feeding from its mother over there on the left, the drunken ne'er-do-well in the center, and the toothless ancient stooped and silent over here on the right. The history of man is this same painting again and again and *again*, but simply with the players on the stage moving from over there, to center stage, to over here for the final exit. Only the costumes change, as there will always be something de rigueur and something else passe and outre.

OK. So, I will try to put my thoughts together as one of the old ones. Let me chatter for a while and tell you just what I see from this most unusual vantage point of being one of the ancients. I didn't choose this role, and I wasn't expecting to have to play it. It was not part of my plan. It just quietly came upon me, and here I am.

Let me put things into perspective. I will never lead a revolution down the street to storm the door of an oppressor. My enlightened role, if it is wanted, would be to suggest what street to use, based on the knowledge of the history of which streets have failed. I cannot personally mount an attack on an infringement of Constitutional rights. All I can do is to make note that such an infringement has taken place. The potential loss of any of the freedoms in our society calls for battle by alert activists. My contribution is to support and encourage the battler by keeping him aware of the other freedoms that we have already lost. At my gentle age of retrospect, I am realizing that, to be effective, I must know where I am inside myself. Wisdom, as has been said by someone, is the art of understanding others. Enlightenment is the art of understanding yourself.

This was the reason, quite simply, why I taught at Berkeley for years. How many people can one person get to and influence, and at what

cost? The people in control of the world, from the highest (the national military or elected dictators) clear down to the lowest (the martinet who controls the issuance of local business permits) all maintain their power by enforcing their opinions and prejudices as law. Their success must be weighed against the fact that they are targets as well. There will always be someone who wants their position, and will use whatever weapon he might require to get it. The price you must pay: you may be on top and should be looking forward, but you must always be looking behind you, over your shoulder, to see who is the second runner so you can neutralize him. One wrong move and you are no longer effective. Or there will be that one person in a thousand, that sociopath, who can never be in the position of second runner, so declares you to be the devil incarnate and tries to assassinate you. You must always have protection against this small but real threat, so you can never experience a truly private life. And there are yet more subtle challenges. Your ability to get others to accept your opinions and prejudices requires the support of many underlings, and you have to mold your expressed opinions to incorporate theirs. As the statement of your opinion changes, so gradually does the opinion itself change. It is a loss that cannot be easily recovered.

This is why I preferred being a teacher rather than an administrator. The one-on-one approach was my preference. It is a joy to have a class of young students in front of you, each with his opinions still in the forming stage, and each with personal biases not yet cast in concrete. My once-a-year class at Berkeley was a total pleasure for me and, from the evaluation sheets that are anonymously handed in each year, it was equally satisfactory for the students. It was nominally a course in forensic toxicology, described in the University catalogue as a presentation of the analytical procedures needed in the identification of drugs in pills and powders, body fluids, and tissues. Pretty dull stuff. But the course was really an exploration into the excitement of science and of learning. The lecture detail had all been written out ahead of time, and it was suggested that the students could read the day's lecture before coming to class. I asked, "Are there any questions?" And, as a rule, there were no questions. This then gave me the license to use the printed lecture as a point of departure, and to sail off into the stratosphere. It took about three lectures for most of my students to realize that I was not totally off the wall, and that I would eventually bring this lecturing diversion back to the point from which I had departed. But they came to enjoy the flight with me. There were always a few that couldn't hack this different style, and they split the scene. But always, in their place, an equal number wandered in as the word spread that this was one loose class. It started maybe twenty years ago with about ten students and the body count went up every year. In the last year

I taught, before the State cut funds to the University so severely that I could not continue, the enrollment hit almost a hundred. I expressed my love for organic chemistry, and insisted that it was really an art form rather than a science, and treated it as such. So I asked my class about chemistry and discovered, each year, that almost every student felt an intense dislike for it.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because," I was told, "It is taught as a course in memory. Here's a typical assignment. For next week memorize pages 89 to 146 and there will be a quiz on Monday."

They had come to expect midterms with true-false questions that can be graded by computer. Instead, they found that I asked questions for which I myself had no answers. No one could cheat on the midterms, since they were all open book — bring all the references you want, and if there is something unclear, ask me and I will try to share an explanation with everyone. And, if the hour might be used better with active lecturing rather than passive sitting around writing in blue-books, why not take the exams home to complete, and hand them in next week.

"But how do you know we won't get help in finding out the answers?"

"Get help if you need to. I want you to find out the answers."

Each year, I started with a very simple request. Get three, maybe four, concepts into your awareness. I don't mean simply to "learn" these things. I mean really and truly get them to become part of you. Live with them until they become obvious and inescapable. There will be that light that goes on overhead with an explosive "Ah Hah" being the expression of understanding. "Of course!" "How obvious!" I told them that if they got these concepts, they would pass the course with an excellent grade. And those who didn't would fail the course. Well, maybe not really fail, but we would both be disappointed. These concepts are extremely simple, but they would not have been easily stated, or even easily conceived of, when I was younger. Sometimes I wonder if you have to get to a certain age before you can be comfortable with some truly simple realities. In any case, I was going to do my best to make them clear to my students.

Let me give one example of such a concept: no fact can ever be proved. Some people today accept as fact that the earth is round. But you cannot perform an experiment that will prove it. Any number of experiments can be designed and performed which, if just a single one is successful, will disprove it. And as they fail, one by one, the reality of the earth's being really round will emerge as an ever stronger hypothesis. But it takes only a single experiment that fails, and the hypothesis is out the window. The earth is not round. It must be something else. Never forget that it was

only the day before yesterday (so to speak) that it was accepted as a fact that the earth was flat.

This is the thesis that was named "Inductive Inference" by the great Elizabethan scholar, Francis Bacon. His recipe for the establishment of the truth of a fact was deceptively simple. State the "fact" as a hypothesis, and design an experiment that will show this hypothesis to be wrong. Carry out the experiment. If you fail, then there is a little more reason to believe that the fact is indeed fact. But it is still not proven. If you succeed with your experiment, then the fact goes down in flames, and your efforts now can be directed to the search for a different, and perhaps better, hypothesis. It is only the failure to disprove a hypothesis that can lend weight to its validity. But proof? That is not obtainable. Many years ago I had a quiet dinner with a research person from the FDA, who told me that marijuana would never be approved for popular use until it had been proven safe.

"What," I asked him, "would be the final experiment that would prove its safety?"

"Well," he admitted, "there isn't really any definitive experiment that would answer that concern."

"Then, I must assume that marijuana will never be approved by the FDA?"

"I guess you're right."

This is an example of the Bacon thesis from the world of the realpolitic. You cannot prove safety. You can only fail to demonstrate danger. Marijuana is still illegal and I suspect will remain so for a very long time.

Another true pleasure in teaching, especially when you are an old person, is that you can get away with murder. As a young professor, you see your lecture topic in terms of details, but as you age you appreciate that the overall music is more important. Details can be gotten from reference texts. But there is no incentive for the student to search them out unless he is interested, and it is this interest that must be kindled. But just as you might be able to present a broader picture of something that is intrinsically complex, you can lose the sense of urgency for presenting it at all. Phrases such as, "Why bother?" or, "Who really cares?" are dangerous to say because, with sufficient repeating, they become increasingly believed by you. How often have you heard someone say, "I'm so tired," and watch them use this as a justification for slowing down and doing less. Or to continue to use the cane that was called for with some past injury, because it elicited sympathy and attention. Patterns establish reality, so break all patterns. Do it one way today, and another tomorrow. Periodically break all habits, regardless of how good they are. Learn something

new. Teach by example. And share the excitement of discovery with a child by letting him see your own genuine excitement in discovery.

You realize now that the rules are really quite simple. You are at peace with your beliefs, and can quietly act out of them. You may appear to be the gray has-been at the outer fringes of the group picture, but you are as alive as any of them, and can be extraordinarily effective by cycling back to the youngsters. Catch their attention. You see them, and for a magic moment they see you. Be a teacher, and you will be eternal.

## CHAPTER 20. DESIGNER DRUGS

(Shura's voice)

The world of chemistry is, to me at least, without any question the most exciting of all the disciplines of science. It is developing with extraordinary rapidity, it is continuously providing discoveries that are unexpected, and there seems to be no logical limit as to where it might go. Astronomy, mathematics, archeology, all continuously reward us with the discovery of the unknown. The things discovered have always been there. It is just that we did not know them.

Chemical syntheses also provide discovery of the unknown, but all the unknowns are without any earlier history, at least here on earth. Each new compound produced by a chemist is a glimpse into a universe of the unprecedented, without any history and without any agenda. As far as we know, at the moment before its creation, no hint of it existed anywhere in the cosmos. At the moment of its creation, it exists in full beauty. This is why I am totally captivated by the art of chemistry, and why I say it is the most exciting of all the scientific disciplines. Everything that is newly created in my laboratory is also new in the known universe, as far as I am aware, and therefore there can be no one who can advise me as to what its properties will be. There is a thrill in creating new things. Let me to share this excitement with you.

There are millions and millions of compounds that are known, that have been described in the literature and that constitute our chemical heritage. Who knows the extent of undiscovered treasures all around us? We have not yet looked in the right place. Like a mummy in an undiscovered tomb, or a star in some undescribed galaxy, they may be unknown to us, but they might be present in a tree leaf, or a moss spore. But if we are diligent, and keep searching, they can be found because in this very moment, they do indeed exist. It is a process of discovery, not of invention.

These many compounds can be discovered in the world of animals around us. There are the biochemicals of the life process. There are foods,



and metabolites, hormones, enzymes, and minerals that in essence define us. In some ways we share common molecules; we all produce the same urea. In some ways, we are totally unique; we each produce different DNA. These compounds can have their origins in the world of plants. There are the alkaloids in the plants. There are the steroids, the terpenes, the sugars and the essential oils as well, and all can influence our behavior. These many compounds have had their origins in the yet simpler forms of life, which are anything but simple: the fungi, the bacteria, the molds and yeasts and viruses, that have provided us with our poisons and our anti-poisons, from the time of life's origins. Here one can often find that the bug which is so threatening to us can be closely related to a cousin bug that just might provide a curative antibiotic which could control the threatening bug.

But these compounds of nature, these treasures from the world about us, are only a small part of this chemical heritage. It is the discovery part. Many, many more of the known compounds are from the imagination — and the diligence — of man. This is the invention part. The technology of controlling, of directing chemical reactions, has created an ever-expanding collection of new molecules. None of them have been seen before in nature. Therefore they have no obvious role in the natural process. They can have no evolutionary significance as their reason for being. Let us look at new and novel chemicals with new and novel structures. Let us see how they have come to be.

How does a chemist make, or describe, or define a new compound? In the early days, new compounds were produced by accident or by luck. Through the middle of the last century, more and more organic compounds became known; the count soared dramatically. As the number of compounds known increased rapidly, the number of possible combinations of these compounds increased exponentially. From the systematic study of these combinations, there emerged an awareness of the rules of reactivity. And with the increased accuracy of reaction predictions, and the development of tools such as spectroscopy and chromatography, there came forth the concept of molecular structure. The last 100 years of chemistry can be seen as the century of creation rather than of discovery.

This "creativity" concept has given rise to the philosophy that there can be target compounds. There can be synthetic strategies, rather than simply cooking things together, and observing the results. There has been a shift from: "Let's throw this together with that, with a pinch of something else, and see what comes out of it," to: "Let's see if we can create something new."

This is a new definition of the research approach. Instead of asking: "What have we done?" we can now ask: "What can we do?"

With the concept of a molecular structure as a device for looking at a compound, in the case of these compounds being drugs, it was a natural development to study the relationship between structure and activity. The concept of the designing of a drug for a specific purpose had suddenly become very real, and very desirable.

There are two concepts used presently in our country, that should be held separate. On the one hand, there is the "designing of drugs" which describes an exciting and socially acceptable research process. Through "drug design" one can conceive of, synthesize and define new drugs that are related to old drugs. On the other hand, there is the term "designer drugs." A clothing company called "Levi's" had a popular product, a line of blue, washable pants, that were known as "Blue-jeans." A fad started up for well known people to add a little bit of personal identification to otherwise "normal" jeans, and attach their names to the product. And sometimes to sell them for twice the usual price. One could find "Gloria Vanderbilt" jeans and "Calvin Klein" jeans. These became known as "Designer Jeans" which was a term of merchandising and promotion. When a series of unrecognized variations of the narcotic Fentanyl appeared on the street as substitutes for heroin, the term "Designer Drugs" was coined by Professor Gary Henderson, at the University of California at Davis, to refer to these substitutes. However, there were no well-known people associated with the new drugs. The only names associated with them were street slang terms such as "China White." The term "Designer Drugs" became a term of condemnation, and was used to imply an attempt to circumvent the law. It says, "I will get around your careful definition of explicitly defined illegal drugs, and I will provide new drugs that fall outside of that definition."

What are the motives for designing new chemicals? There are three that are obvious to me: the circumvention of drug law, the circumvention of patent claims, and the development of research tools. And each of the motives presents the researcher, the scientist, the inventor in a distinct and well-defined role. The effort to evade the explicit letter of the law is the act that gave rise to the actual term, "Designer Drugs," and it is used in the United States only in its most negative sense. The average citizen, on hearing the phrase, will immediately assume the target to be bad. The chemist involved is believed to be trying to develop something that would bypass the existing narcotics laws. He will be assumed to be engaged in some unacceptable behavior, and the authorities will try to stop him and then punish him. The drugs themselves will be branded as being evil, having been made only for the purpose of appealing to the drug user, to the anti-social drop-out, to those who define the worst of our society.

The second reason for the designing of new chemicals is quite the opposite. It celebrates all of the acceptable attributes of our Western

capitalist philosophy. The rationale for the designing of new drugs goes something like this: "Our competition is making piles of money with its sales of one of the most in-demand products of the year." For a pharmaceutical company, this might be a popular antidepressant. For an agricultural industrial corporation, this might be a potent and highly selective insecticide. For a tobacco company, this might be an additive that makes smoking more pleasant or less painful. Each of these products will certainly be protected by an air-tight patent. How does a competing company break into a highly successful monopoly? It tells its research chemists to go into the laboratory and design a new molecule that will get around the letter of the patent law. Go and invent something to make and sell, that would not be specifically illegal. The chemist involved will try to develop something that would not be in conflict with the existing patent laws. Society responds to this example of circumvention of the law in a totally positive way. This behavior is always applauded as being completely correct. The intellectual environment that surrounds the search for these drugs, these new industrial discoveries, is held in the highest esteem. This type of drug design is considered to be totally appropriate. The chemist involved in this kind of search is seen as being engaged in the most noble of scientific work, and his employers will reward his successes.

And as to the drugs themselves? The drugs themselves could well be accepted as being of great social value, in that they could contribute to a better standard of living. But remember that, although the reasons that justify these two very different philosophies for the designing of drugs are completely opposite, the goals were the same. The motive is to get around the law. And to make money in the process. They are different only as to their acceptance by our society. The procedures actually employed in each are identical. In each of the two cases, the inventor explores a path of discovery that follows closely to what is known, and he learns from it, and perhaps even steals from it, but he always takes care not to make anything so similar to it that the law (be it narcotics law or patent law) will pay too much attention to what is being done.

The third technique for the designing of new drugs contains elements of both of these earlier examples, the modification of known things to make unknown things, and yet it has a purpose all its own. This is the design of instruments of research, the design of instruments of inquiry. Here one can create chemicals for the use of researchers, tools that might answer questions about uniquely human capabilities such as logical thought, self-esteem (or lack of it), motivation (or lack of it), joy, euphoria, despair, schizophrenia. How can one design a probe that will reveal some detail of the human mind? One must always remember that here one is not speaking about the brain. The brain has been looked at in great anatomical detail over the years. It has been the target of a great

deal of recent-day study in biochemistry, neurotransmitter receptors, actions of agonists and antagonists. But the brain that is most often used is the brain of the rat, as that is the only presently acceptable workplace for the neurochemists. But I am speaking here about the mind. This is found only in humans. How does one design the tools for exploring the normal function of the human mind? Or for exploring the possibilities of repairing problems with mental functions, not brain functions, so as to bring them back to the normal? Or for exploring, or even extending and elaborating upon these mental functions, to extend them beyond what we presently accept as the normal?

Some of these designs may lead to a molecule that acts in some way like an illegal drug. And legal authorities might believe that you are violating the narcotics laws. Society might frown upon you, and perhaps try to punish you. And there may be action taken, to make your invention illegal.

Some of these designs may produce therapeutic drugs that might well be commercially useful. And industry will come to you with offers of patenting, and of exploitation. And society will smile upon you, and perhaps try to reward you. And there will be moves to protect, and thus hide, your discovery under patent law.

But most often, these drugs that have been targeted for exploring the mind are neither abusable nor exploitable. They are simply what they are; research tools that are interesting only in man.

This is the work that I choose to do, in this third area of the designing of drugs; one which I have found to *be* unbelievably exciting. I want to describe to you a little bit of this particular world of tools. I will use the vocabulary of a tool-maker. When you design a new tool, a new compound, a potential drug, you are playing very much the role of an artist. You have a blank canvas in front of you. You have a pallet of oil paints, which is your collection of chemicals, and solvents, and catalysts, and reagents. You have the skill and talent in your hands of creating. With the artist, this is painting; with the chemist, this is synthesizing. And you have an inspired image of what the final picture might be. You have a target. You may be quite surprised as to where you eventually get to, but you indeed have a goal. Let me give one example of this form of artistry. I would like to walk you through the act of creation, from the initial design, to the actual birth of the new drug, to the introduction and getting-to-know this new individual, and up to the final definition and understanding of the completed product.

The example I have chosen is a research drug called N,N-diisopropyl tryptamine, or DIPT for short. As to the initial design consideration, I had a pretty good vision of what I wanted to create. I have produced my most satisfying creations using one of two types of canvases, the nucleus of

phenethylamine or the nucleus of tryptamine. Here I knew that a tryptamine was needed, but how was I to embroider it? My past work had assured me that if I were to put lots of bulky stuff on the basic nitrogen, I might get a compound with oral activity. Should I place a group on the aromatic ring? Nah. Keep it simple. Go for a simple product, and maybe it just might be a clean and instructive product. Forgive me the mixing of the metaphors of artist and chemist but many of the concepts of designing a painting or a compound are identical.

Let me continue the mental picture. What kind of chemical shrubbery should I put on the right hand side of the canvas, on that basic nitrogen? How about *a couple* of isopropyl groups? They have never been used in this particular situation and they have an appealing, interlocking three-dimensional nature. A nice kind of bulkiness. Once the concept, the design, is pretty much complete, it's time to put oil to canvas. This stage of the process can be difficult, or it can be straightforward. But it always gives promise of being instructive. It can be especially informative when everything goes wrong. It is then that new and unexpected things can be learned about chemistry. In this particular case, however, there were no surprises. In the tight jargon of the world of chemistry, let me sum up the "how" part by simply stating that the indole was converted — via oxalyl chloride and diisopropylamine — to the glyoxamide — which was reduced with LAH to give me DIPT. The hydrochloride salt was a fine white solid.

So, having designed a potential drug and given it birth, so to speak, I now must meet it and get to know it. Looking at these fine white crystals is, in one way, like looking at a newborn baby. Either one, the compound or the baby, is a total unknown. True, I know the structure of the compound, and its obvious physical properties, but in no way do I really "know" the chemical. The structure it possesses is only one of the many brushes that I have used in this creation process. I must begin to interact with my creation by employing a mixture of caution, curiosity, and excitement. I will learn from this creation, and it will learn from me. It is a truly mutual development. With time I will gradually discover the inherent properties, the unique nature of this compound. But as I learn, I always become aware that some of these very properties that I am observing have been instilled into it by me. It is by this give and take interaction that we become familiar with one-another. The first clue of the nature of this friendship between DIPT and me was when I became aware of the fact that I was listening to a recording of "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra" on the radio in my study. It sounded absolutely terrible. I had accepted some 18 milligrams of DIPT into my body a short time earlier, and I now had my first hint as to just how it might become a useful tool someday. Its value might be in learning how we interpret sounds.

I knew that there was no way possible that any symphonic group

could be so awful and still be tolerated in the recording of this little gem of Benjamin Britten. I began to pay attention to what was inside me, not outside me. Somehow, a certain number of cycles were being removed from the perceived sound, so that a lowering of the apparent pitch was being experienced. Different notes were distorted to different extents. It was not like putting your finger on the edge of a record player turn-table, and slowing it down. There was no distortion of the sense of time. But there was a complex distortion of chords, and that which would otherwise have been an acceptable harmonic relationship sounded terrible. This type of highly specific distortion gives promise of a tool for looking at the interface between an actual physical sound and how we hear it. These two realities, what actually goes into the ear, and what we think went into the ear, can be very, very different. A recent study has established that DIPT is primarily associated with the auditory process and that this property can be demonstrated in others. Two subjects with absolute pitch were able to state what the exact pitch was of any one of several single musical notes that were generated for them by an independent observer. They provided their opinions before, during, and after exposure to DIPT. Their assignments were very accurate before the drug was given and quite inaccurate while the drug was present inside them, then accurate again after the effects of the drug had dissipated. This allowed an objective time-curve of effects to be constructed, and satisfactorily confirmed this unique property of the drug.

Here is a potentially superb tool to explore and begin to understand one of the complex functions of the human mind. Perhaps it can be defined pharmacologically by the neurotransmitters it replaces or interferes with. Perhaps it can be labeled with carbon-11 and its dynamics observed with a PET camera in a human subject. What would be the scan of its distribution in a tone-deaf subject? What would be its effect on a schizophrenic subject who is hearing the voice of God?

And the most exciting part of any discovery such as this, is that perhaps this tool might be a prototype for another. You must ask yourself a sequence of questions. What do you want from a new drug or a new tool? How would you design it? How can you learn what you have? And having learned this, now what new tool do you want to create? This cycle can be repeated as often as you wish. Nothing might come out of this series of questions, the next time around. But just maybe, out of it might come some totally different and unexpected tool; one that might someday be used to explore a little further into the miracle of the human mind.

This is the true magic that is to be found in the concept of "Designer Drugs."

Part Five:

Drugs and Politics

## CHAPTER 21. COULD WE? SHOULD WE?

(Shura's voice)

I was driving back up to the Owl Club annual encampment a week or so ago, with Martin, and we got into a discussion about one of the lakeside talks by an oncologist from Texas. He was an unexciting but very well organized speaker, who spoke about environmental origins of cancer, and especially about preventable cancer. There was no surprise that much of his presentation concerned the use of tobacco, and the public health problems that have been a consequence of smoking.

I forget the statistics, but they were impressive. Lung cancer has come from a virtually unknown diagnosis at the turn of the century to a major killer in society. In recent years this has become true for women as well as for men. And heart attacks and emphysema are both undeniably associated with smoking. And there is a good argument for bladder cancer. In short, the use of cigarettes represents one of the major preventable sources of cancer and its tragic economic and social consequences.

So we got into a fun discussion — could one by law stop the use of cigarettes?

It became something of a game — I would propose some restriction or control, and he would adjust it a bit to soften the edges. Then he would add another idea, and I would move it around a bit. But it went something like this:

First, let's put a ten year scale to the program. Start by phasing out the government's subsidy to the tobacco growers over the course of ten years, so that some alternate crops might be found. There would be a more than modest savings for the taxpayer right there. And pass some sort of an ordinance that smoking in public is a minor crime. Say, a five dollar fine and the confiscation of the cigarette butt on the spot. But with a receipt so that if there is a medically valid reason requiring continuous smoking, the courts could refund the fine (and the butt). This is, after all, the way they effectively stopped the use of horns in Paris. They outlawed horns along



with the threat of arrest, and then they outlawed horns with the threat of arrest and court-imposed fines. Nothing happened. Still a din in traffic. Then a simple ordinance — one honk and you are fined 5000 francs ON THE SPOT with a receipt. In 24 hours, virtual silence. So — no smoking in public. Still OK in cars, in the home, in the rest-rooms and the telephone booths of the country, but not where others gather.

And then, we went on, once that has sort of worn itself into the behavior patterns, a move could be made to allow tobacco sales only in state or government stores. That would allow an eventual restriction of hours and, as was found in Sweden with the nationalization of the pharmacy profession, considerable additional profit to the government. As was done there, the rationalization would be that the excess funds coming in could be used for medical research. Perhaps even cancer research. No one could really complain.

Our enthusiasm rolled on unabated. After a couple of years, tighten the screws a bit more. Make it a misdemeanor to have an opened pack of cigarettes in your possession in public! This would drive the poor addicted person closer and closer to either quitting for good (our benevolent goal) or truly withdrawing from social intercourse (at least it would get them out of sight). And if, in conjunction with a legal search within one's home, an opened pack of cigarettes were to be found, then this too would constitute evidence of criminal behavior.

Oh yes, there would probably be an ongoing black market for cigarettes smuggled in from across the border because of the profits that would accompany illegal sales, but in due time the problem, and the human suffering, and the social expenses associated with tobacco use would be brought down to acceptable levels.

A very impressive social program.

And I said to Martin, "I really think we could do it!"

"Yes, but it would be a pretty heavy scene from the law enforcement point of view."

"But should we do it?" I asked him.

He thought for a few seconds, smiled, and shook his head.

"No. We have a pretty good system of personal liberties as we are right now, and this might be a valid process if seen simply from the health and welfare point of view but it flies in the face of our civil rights."

We drove a bit in silence. Then I asked him, "Then why is heroin illegal?"

To this, he found no answer.

## CHAPTER 22. BARRIERS TO RESEARCH

(Shura's voice)

Scientific literature has become unmanageable. Every year more and more journals pop up like mushrooms, dedicated to the publication of papers of an increasingly narrow scope and appealing to an audience with correspondingly narrow interests.

Some of this is a product of the publish-or-perish ethic of the academic world, where a faculty member will be weighed for his worth in tenure by the number of publications he has amassed. The push to publish, to get another paper out, is a tremendous driving force behind every young scientist who wishes to create a slot for himself in his university department or to receive a priority on his pending grant application. The pressure is expressed in a joke told about pharmacologists by those who are not pharmacologists. What is the definition of a pharmacologist? A laboratory person who, upon injecting a compound into an animal, produces seven publications. This is sometimes, sadly, referred to as "Salami Science." Paper after paper is published, each looking at substantially the same research work, but through an ever-changing lens. Inject a drug into a pregnant female mouse. Run a maze, and publish a paper on drug discrimination. Collect a dropping, and publish on metabolic transformation. Collect a second dropping and report pharmacodynamic kinetic curves. Let nature take its course and hatch the young, then put a note into a teratogenicity speciality journal. And on and on and on. Sometimes the single "injecting of a compound" is cleverly disguised in the experimental section; sometimes the authors simply don't bother to hide their sloth. They assume, and quite rightly, that no one out there has either the time, the energy, or the interest, to read all of the literature.

But some of this mushrooming of the scientific literature is the product of an ego expression of a different sort. As an example of this type, consider the aging and not-too-widely acknowledged Dr. Angst, Professor of Botany at Silverdale, who asks himself how many scientists are aware of

the seminal work that he had done, some twenty years ago, in defining the Genus *Xelorhobida* in the area of the *Euphorbia*? "Maybe the time is right," he will say to himself, "to start a research journal, which I'll call 'Xelorhobida Letters', and probably I can get Pergamon to publish it if I could guarantee two hundred subscribers. I will call my buddies and get them to promise to submit a research paper in the near future. I'll make sure by appointing them all associate editors, and giving them free subscriptions."

The average citizen has no idea how much of his income tax dollar goes to just this sort of vanity stroking. Every month there are a half dozen new journals being published that are designed to appear six times a year (the issues may be some 50 pages each) for an outrageous annual subscription rate of \$320 to institutional libraries. And so often the journal predictably fades from sight at the conclusion of Volume 2. Many of the publication vehicles here can be called the hyphenated journals, things that require an overlap of normally separate disciplines, giving rise to names such as: *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, *In Vitro Cellular and Developmental Biology*, and *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry*. Occasionally one finds an obscure and totally in-house name such as *MacGuire's Comments*. They come, they go. But they fill a need for someone, somewhere. This is the bottom level of published scientific literature.

The middle level consists of journals that offer to publish the research findings of scientists within a given discipline. This is a large body of publications, appearing at regular intervals, presenting reports that are directed to readers of a specific discipline. Some of the titles name the discipline, e.g., *Toxicology*, *Phytochemistry*, *Analytical Chemistry*, *Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology*, and *Neurology*. Many of the journals of specific professional societies serve a second level of communication — not only an exchange of scientific information, but a comfortable way of staying in touch between the mandatory national meetings. Examples are: *The Journal of the American Chemical Society* and the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*. There are also the publications of societies that promote themselves as being the organizations that define the scientist. Are you a pharmacologist? Of course. I am a member of the Society of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, and I have published in JPET. Oh! Then you must be a pharmacologist! It is through publication at this middle level that most of the quality research discoveries are presented to the scientific community.

But what about that highest level of publication, the interdisciplinary journal which is devoted to any and all fields that are collected under the broad umbrella of scientific observations and factual reporting? When I was young, and blossoming forth into this exciting world, I had been taught that every major country (one with some self-image of being "first

world" in the areas of research) had its own journal that could serve as a sort of national emblem. These were the ne-plus-ultra of class and prestige. To publish in such a journal was a mark of international recognition and acceptance by your peers. England had its *Nature*, the United States had *Science*, Switzerland had *Experientia*, France had the *Comptes Rendu*, and Germany had its *Naturwissenschaften*. Each of these maintained the principle of multidisciplinary reporting as a founding heritage, but each of them has found that such an ideal does not bring in enough subscriptions. And so, each of them has become more and more specialized, at the cost of losing all appeal to a broad interest amongst its readership.

*Science*, the weekly publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, is an excellent example. Years ago, articles involving archeology, geology, astronomy, mathematics, and embryology would compete equally for space on its pages. Recently, sadly, the editorial staff has chosen to go the genome route, and a disproportionate number of pages deal with genotypes and DNA sequencing. With a \$10,000,000,000 encouragement to be realized over several years from several governmental agencies for the unraveling of the human genome, I can't fault their specialization. That's where the money is. There's where the public acclaim will come from. The advertising revenue reflects this specialization. Yet, I am sad to say that I believe this is prostitution at its most blatant, and I have let my membership in the AAAS lapse.

So, it was with some surprise that I received an invitation to attend, and address, an AAAS meeting in San Francisco. The topic of the symposium was "Designer Drugs" but it was made known to me that there would be quite a bit of freedom extended, allowing discussions to involve related topics. I assumed that there would be much mention of MDMA, since that drug had just been swept into the Schedule I classification by the invocation of the Emergency Scheduling Act of 1984. And, as this move would effectively stop any and all research on its use in clinical practice, I knew that this would be the area I would have to address. Since there had been no medical utility acknowledged for MDMA, it was placed in the most restricted category, Schedule I. As such, it was substantially untouchable in the research environment, and it would be most difficult to discover medical value. I saw a mindless iron hand removing some of the freedoms of research, and somehow, this loss had to be exposed. Why not use the invitation from the AAAS gene cowboys to the San Francisco Annual meeting, in early 1989, as an opportunity to discuss this situation? Why not, indeed!

What follows is the text of my presentation. I thought of creating a completely nasty title such as "Psychedelics and the Genome," but I abandoned the idea. So my presentation was more modestly titled; it was given to an audience of perhaps 400 individuals and largely ignored.

## BARRIERS TO RESEARCH

In a paper that I presented a few years ago to the California Association of Toxicology, I stated that we were blessed in this country with what could be considered among the best narcotics laws in the world. Approximately 250 drugs, and four plants, had been brought under Federal control and were specifically and explicitly named. There was rarely any ambiguity in the courts as to whether a material was or was not an illegal drug.

The procedure for adding new materials was well defined. When the Federal authorities became aware of a drug which they felt might present a potential public health hazard if it remained unregulated, a published announcement was made through the Federal Register. This action started a sixty-day process, and at the end of that time, the drug would either be placed in a schedule, in keeping with the degree of its danger and the presence or absence of medical utility, or hearings would be set up to help decide these issues.

There were many in the law enforcement community who felt that this process was too time consuming. Congress was asked to authorize that the hearings process be deferred, and in 1984 it passed an emergency scheduling act that allowed the temporary placement of a drug into Schedule I without hearings and with only a thirty-day notice. This was to apply only to drugs which were felt to be an imminent hazard to public safety. But please note that the drugs involved were still explicitly named, and the hearings could still be held if specifically requested.

Fentanyl is a synthetic narcotic with many years of proven medical usefulness, and it served as the focal point of the Analogue Enforcement Act of 1986. A great number of structural modifications of Fentanyl had been synthesized by Janssen Pharmaceutica in Belgium. Some of them, compounds such as Alfentanil, Sufentanil, Lofentanil, and Carfentanil, have been incorporated successfully into medical and veterinary practice. All of these are morphine-like narcotics that differ from one-another largely in their potency and duration of action. A very large number of additional structural modifications of this parent drug have been explored in the academic community.

Then, a few years ago, one of these synthetic variants of Fentanyl appeared in the street heroin trade. Almost as soon as it had been identified, a second and different one appeared, instilling a legitimate concern within the law enforcement community. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) expressed its fear that these new drugs, cleverly named "designer drugs" in imitation of the "designer jeans" fashion concept, could continue to appear, one after another, and effective enforcement would be impossible. Although the Emergency Scheduling Act of 1984 was fully in force,

it was stated that a general, rather than a specific, law was needed.

As an aside, let me ask you to put a moment's thought into the phrase "designer drugs." How could we, as scientists, have allowed such an idiotic, pejorative term to be used in our hearing more than once, without having immediately torn it to bits and shown it to be completely meaningless! Every one of us knows perfectly well that when you synthesize a new potential drug, whether you work for Ciba or for the CIA, what you come up with is a designer drug. Designed to do something new. Perhaps designed to avoid patent law. Maybe designed to allow *a* new scientific paper to be published. Almost every new and unknown drug is a variation on an old, known drug.

Congress was given carefully worded suggestions by the DEA, through the offices of the Attorney General. These concerned the need for a "Designer Drug Law" that could be used as a blanket control covering any new drug that could be abused, if it lay outside of the medically approved pharmacopoeia. In other words, Congress was provided a written outline that would establish legal control over any "designer drug."

The recommendations of the DEA were followed nearly verbatim, and Federal law was written and passed to attempt to control anything and everything that might appear on the illicit drug scene. This legislation is called "The Controlled Substance Analogue Enforcement Act of 1986" and is part of Public Law 99-570. It was signed into law on October 27, 1986, just days before the national elections, and the news and ramifications of it have been largely lost in the noise and drama of the political events of the time. I personally believe that this law presents a shameful barrier to a very important segment of scientific research.

Let me dissect this law into its two major parts. What is an analogue? And what is the behavior, involving an analogue, that is criminal?

According to this law, a drug is an analogue if it meets any one of the following criteria:

First, the chemical structure of the drug is considered. The compound is an analogue if its structure is substantially similar to the structure of any listed Schedule I or II drug. Just what are the structures of the drugs that are contained in these two schedules? You can find a complete spectrum of functional groups. All four types of amines are present; primary amines, secondary amines, tertiary amines, and quarternary ammonium salts. All three types of alcohols are present; primary alcohols, secondary alcohols and tertiary alcohols. There are acids, esters, ethers, amides, ketones, and nitriles.

There are examples of all the most common heterocyclic ring systems, such as pyridines, piperidines, pyrrolidines, indoles, imidazoles,

morpholines, thiophenes, furans, pyrans, quinazolines, dioxoles, oxazolines, pyrimidines, and purines. And of course, there are simple benzene-ring aromatic compounds and there are simple non-benzene-ring aliphatic compounds including cyclopropyl rings, cyclobutyl rings, cyclopentyl rings and cyclohexyl rings. One would be hard put to find a structure of any drug, anywhere, which could not be argued by some person, somewhere, as being in some way structurally related to a Schedule I or a Schedule II drug.

And what was the reason for the use of the intentionally vague phrase "substantially similar?" There is a term in rhetoric known as a disclaimer, a word introduced as a hedge or qualification, a word chosen to allow a certain freedom of interpretation. Words or phrases such as *almost*, *probably*, *approximately*, *in a few days*, *in two weeks at the latest*, are disclaimers. There is a measured ambiguity in the phrase "similar to" and there is a measured ambiguity in the phrase "substantially the same as." But what is to be inferred from "substantially similar?" Suddenly, the exactness, the precision of the original Controlled Substances Act, with its explicitly named drug targets, had been totally compromised.

A second, independent definition of an analogue deals with its pharmacological action. A drug is to be legally considered as an analogue if it has a stimulant, depressant, or hallucinogenic action that is substantially similar to that of a Schedule I or Schedule II drug. In short, any drug which affects the CNS (central nervous system) in any of these ways, or in ways that could be construed as being "substantially similar" to those evoked by a scheduled drug, becomes an analogue within this legal definition. Again, the vague double disclaimer "substantially similar" must be reckoned with as part of the description.

A third definition is an extension of this, and involves the way a drug is represented. If a material is intentionally represented as having a stimulant, depressant, or hallucinogenic action substantially similar to that of a Schedule I or Schedule II drug, it becomes an analogue.

It is generally accepted that if two of these three definitions are met then the chemical or drug in question becomes a controlled substance analogue. The law explicitly states that there are four criteria, any of which will exclude it from becoming an analogue; if it is already a controlled substance, if it has an approved drug application, if a particular person has an exemption allowing him investigational use of that drug in question, or it is not intended for human consumption.

And what is the nature of one's behavior with an analogue that shall constitute a criminal act? It is the intent to make it available for human consumption. And if such were to occur, the analogue would be treated as if it were a Schedule I drug.

As to what human research studies may or may not be performed, this law has given the authority for the decision directly to governmental administrative bodies, where it had never before rested.

The function of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has evolved over the years into one of safeguarding the public from exposure to medicines that have disproportionate hazards, or that are ineffective, or that are mislabeled. And the evaluation of protocols for the determination of actions and risks of medicines is clearly the FDA's major contribution to the protection of the public from any inadequate evaluation of these risks. But this role has heretofore been restricted to the weighing of the virtues of a drug versus the risk of using it as a medicine. What are the virtues being claimed? What is the basis for these claims?

The FDA has always carefully avoided any act that could be interpreted as directing the practice of medicine. That was the province and the responsibility of the physician. And they have always avoided any intimate involvement in the structure of academic research, as this was the province and the responsibility of the individual researcher. The officials of the FDA had never before been given the role of judging the merits of research, or been put in a position of having the power to allow or disallow the pursuit of a research question. That has classically been a matter involving the relationship between the researcher, his professional peers, and his experimental subjects.

The placement of medical research approval within law enforcement, the DEA, is unthinkable stupid and inappropriate, and cannot be tolerated.

We, as the research community, have largely accepted this complete somersault over the age-old traditions of exploratory research. We have quietly acceded to a non-scientific authority that can oversee and, to an increasing degree, influence the direction of our inquiry. Somewhere along the line in this country, within the past five years, we have begun to lose that sense of independent looking, asking, searching, and questioning, and the insistence upon being personally responsible for what we do in our search and how we conduct that search.

I am making a heart-felt plea for the changing of these drug laws; laws which take the research initiative concerning human studies away from scientists and give it to politicians and bureaucrats.

I know that there will be a number of questions and arguments. Let me try to anticipate them.

---



Q: THERE HAVE BEEN REMARKABLE SUCCESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL MODELS FOR HUMAN ILLNESSES. WHY NOT USE THEM AND AVOID THE RISKS IMPLICIT IN HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION?

Indeed, many human illnesses now have superb animal models. Agents that relieve pain can be screened for, and evaluated in, animals which have been given painful stimuli. Agents that can reduce blood pressure or cholesterol levels can be titrated in animals that have high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels. Toxic side-effects can be detected in animals. These are areas where animal research is indispensable in the discovery of new medicines, and in the evaluation of their safety and potential usefulness.

There are numerous areas where animals can be valuable in the search for drugs that are needed for the treatment of non-animal illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis. For these, the animal models that are used can be based on the animal responses to drugs known to be effective in man in the relief of human symptomatology. But the animal models that are used are not intrinsically valid, since these diseases do not exist naturally in the animal. For example, an antipsychotic drug known to be effective in man might induce a characteristic behavior pattern or a consistent biochemical change in an experimental animal. And similar changes by a completely different drug would imply that it, too, might possess an antipsychotic action. The screening of drugs with such animal models can provide leads to new and potentially interesting families of antipsychotic drugs, but the validation of the action must take place in the psychotic human subject. The animal model may even serve research needs by providing an access to receptor site studies or neurochemical research which can be used to explain psychosis in man. Yet, intrinsically, the model in animals is a forced one. There are no spontaneously psychotic rats.

There are, however, many aspects of the human mind for which no animal model is conceivable.

Consider things such as empathy, imagination, ego inflation, creativity, the anticipation of mortality, and the search for meaning, all of which are unique products of the human mind. Not a single one of these qualities can be demonstrated believably in a rat. And I am completely convinced that none of them will be satisfactorily explained by the study of the distribution of neurotransmitters in a rat's brain. So, how can one use a rat as an experimental animal for the discovery of a drug that might influence or touch upon these aspects of human mental and emotional experience? If these areas are to be explored, they can only be explored in man.

Q: BUT THE GOVERNMENTAL REVIEWING AGENCIES ARE COMPOSED OF RESPECTED SCIENTISTS WITH UNQUESTIONED STANDING IN THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY. HOW CAN YOU OBJECT TO THEIR EVALUATIONS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS?

I can object with a simple, straight-forward answer. A person who has integrity, be he explorer, scientist, or philosopher, cannot tolerate another person's usurping his right to ask his question in his own words. If the question is badly asked, or if the answer is sought in sterile ground, the man of integrity takes full responsibility for his own errors or his mistakes. And he learns from them. He will formulate his own questions and he will evolve his own answers, in his own time and way.

In my opinion, the present reality is that permission to conduct certain kinds of scientific research — the kinds that must be done in human beings and cannot be done in any experimental animal — is, for the most part, now given or withheld according to reasons of politics, not of science.

Q: DO YOU ADVOCATE DISCARDING LAWS CONCERNING HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION?

Of course not. There must be laws because there are people who seem unable to empathize with others and who apparently do not care about other people's fear or pain. We must protect the innocent from them. We have known of such people in Hitler's Third Reich and we have known of them in our own CIA. There must be laws that protect the helpless from those persons who would misuse power. There must be laws to punish the abuser of children or the drunk driver. I believe that laws must be at hand which insist upon the three traditional principles of human experimentation: obtaining informed consent, seeking peer review, and the acceptance by the researcher himself of personal responsibility. But all other drug laws must be repealed. Not decriminalized or legalized. These are merely new laws over old ones. Laws involving drugs must, in general, be repealed.

It is within the concept of informed consent that one can find the best answer to society's need to protect its innocent against a potentially abusive member of the research community. When you give informed consent it means that, first of all, you are a fully responsible adult, not a child. Second, that you are aware of yourself, your surroundings, and your social context. And third, that you agree without any kind of coercion (such as rewards or threats) to whatever activity it is that you have decided to participate in.

Peer review represents the establishment of a close liaison with

knowledgeable and interested colleagues. It is through the consensus of a peer group that society is protected against the manipulations of the crackpot, the sociopath, or the seductive charmer who might be able to coerce a naive and unsophisticated individual into giving his informed consent.

The ultimate responsibility for any inquiry must be assumed by the researcher himself. He should be able to speak from personal experience when he states that his new and experimental drug is not life-threatening. He should be able to say with confidence that it is free from disturbing side effects, since he himself has tried it at or above the intended dosages. In the area of psychopharmacology, especially in research with exploratory drugs which may affect the state of mind, I hold that it is irresponsible to give to another person any drug which you have invented or discovered, unless you have personally experienced that drug's effects.

This is a form of ethics that is gradually but steadily disappearing from the research scene. We call upon the government authorities for permission to perform our experiments, as if their blessing somehow assured us of safety, and freedom from risk. There has always been risk in using drugs to probe the machinery of the human mind, just as there has always been risk in using drugs to affect the physical body. There always will be.

If one looks at the basis of this entire business of laws, regulations, and losses of scientific courage, one is confronted with some profound questions. How afraid are we of truly looking at and into the mind? Are we all so distrustful of what we suspect we might find in exploring the human mind and spirit that we must pass laws against certain kinds of investigation?

What is the inevitable future of research into the mind, as opposed to simply the chemistry of the brain, if the laws now on the books are allowed to remain unchanged? The investigation into the nature of mind started with the appearance of man, and it will continue in its many ways as long as man is curious. The tools will remain the same as they have always been. These include the use of meditation, the study of dreams and sleepwalking states, exploration by means of hypnotic trance, and the use of psychoactive substances that bring about alterations in perceptions and states of consciousness.

It would be a tragic development if we were to see the dissemination of knowledge accumulated by such investigations revert to the old system of word-of-mouth, or perhaps underground pamphlets—shades of the Dark Ages. The information which should, in this day and age, be published openly by reputable and responsible scholars in good, respected journals will instead be lost to the scientific community at large. It will

again become a new form of arcane, occult knowledge. This is already happening, as a matter of fact. We are becoming a society of respectable establishment journals, increasingly separated from an underground of mystical-psychological-chemical knowledge that is being transmitted, not from laboratory to laboratory, but from bookstore to bookstore.

**Q: WHAT IS THERE TO BE LOST BY WORKING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THESE NEW REGULATIONS?**

There is everything to be lost. As to drug research that might involve the exploration of a normal, healthy person's state of consciousness, the official position is clear. We are told that, as there is no virtue to be gotten from any such experiment, and since no answer to any valid question can be expected, there can be no risk tolerated. Thus, no experiment can be approved.

I believe that it is more important today than ever before in human history that we begin to try to understand the human mind. The human brain is now very popular, and it is surrounded on all sides by questioners and probers, by makers of positron-emitting ligands that will locate receptor sites that are begging to be named, by analysts with exquisitely sensitive spectrographs which can measure the slightest hints of metabolites in body fluids. The human mind, on the other hand, has always been surprisingly unpopular. It is to many scientists an object of distrust, awe, and apprehension. In many parts of the scientific community, there is an absolute refusal to acknowledge that it exists at all. The only people who seem to be making a living out of trying to understand any part of the mind are psychotherapists, terrorists, and the makers of horror movies.

I am deeply committed to the concept that the art of chemistry can provide superb tools for use in this area of research. Over the last thirty years I have devoted a major part of my efforts to the task of making sense of the human mental processes by the designing of research probes that in some way influence them. The technique I have used follows a logical series of steps: There is the conceptualization of a potential probe that can be argued as having some possible constructive or disruptive effect on a person's psyche or sensorium, it is synthesized, and then it is evaluated through graded dosages in self-experimentation until there is some indication of biological activity noted, or until the assay is deemed — for whatever reason — to be no longer worth the time and risk.

Needless to say, most materials have proven to be of no great value, but some few have made the search worthwhile. With them, a careful clinical trial amongst a small and experienced group of subjects serves to

define the action with considerable exactness, and the findings are then published in an appropriate medical or pharmacological journal so that the compound can be explored by other researchers in the area.

Through just this form of research, several tools and potential pharmaceuticals have come into the hands of researchers. The prototype hallucinogen DOM (STP), the serotonin receptor ligands DOI and DOB, the auditory distortant DIPT, were all discovered by these techniques. There would have been no other way to have discovered them.

I am making an appeal here, very simply, for a resumption of this kind of courage. I am speaking for the removal of artificial restraints that are, if not completely prohibitory of such research, at least casting a heavy chill on it. In the present social and political climate, such a chill is enough to discourage many researchers from these avenues of exploration, avenues which I strongly feel must be travelled. Let me consider a single example, one which was the focus of intense interest at the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP) meetings not long ago in Puerto Rico. This is the remarkable and controversial drug MDMA.

Here is a drug that has the unusual property of, more often than not, freeing a patient in psychotherapy from the anxiety and lack of trust that often prevents the emotionally fragile person from expressing his feelings to another. And, as has been attested to by many therapists and patients, MDMA allows a personal perspective, which is called "insight," with a minimum amount of fear and self-censoring. All of this without any loss of self-control or rationality.

The recent flood of primate research with MDMA has shown that there are long-term changes in the serotonin systems in the brains of some animal species, although there is as yet no clinical study which has shown that such changes occur in man.

I am completely convinced that this is the type of tool that must be developed and explored as a possible adjunct to psychotherapy. The official line is, at the moment, that MDMA has a large risk factor, and no medical utility. That is, in my opinion, totally incorrect. The extent of risk to humans can only be extrapolated from animal experiments, and MDMA has been shown to have less toxicity than the FDA-approved appetite suppressant fenfluramine. But there is a real medical utility and an immense medical promise. The FDA has not allowed any IND (Investigation of New Drug) application to be effective and so, to the extent that the term "currently accepted medical use" means FDA approval for medical use, there can be no medical use. The fact remains that MDMA has proven extraordinarily effective in many clinical applications and therapeutic interventions.

However, since it came to administrative attention at the same time that the Fentanyl analogues became notorious, it was labeled a designer

drug, and condemned as an abuse drug that had no virtue. The DEA holds that it is a hallucinogen, which is simply untrue. MDMA is not a hallucinogen.

How might a compound with similar action be discovered and developed for potential medical utilization? By definition, thanks to the present Analogue Amendments currently in force, such a drug would be an analogue (it would have an action substantially similar to a Schedule I or II drug) and it would be *a* felony to explore it in man without prior FDA approval. And I know of no animal screening, from behavioral screening to drug discrimination studies, which could demonstrate those subtle properties that separate MDMA from any of the structurally related stimulants which do not share those properties.

This is simply one example of the many paths through the unknown territory of the human mind that must be pursued and which are currently very difficult to explore in light of our present scientific and political attitudes.

In an effort to facilitate law enforcement, and in the pursuit of an ideal of rational social behavior, we have allowed laws to be passed which have robbed us of our freedom to inquire. To accept these laws without argument and without protest means not only a further loss of our integrity but also — as I said earlier — a continuing loss of essential information to the scientific community and society at large.

Discoveries about the functioning of the human mind and psyche must be made in the open — not in hiding. The effort to develop a working vocabulary for various levels of mental experience and the sharing of information and theories about what is discovered — all this must be done out loud, not in conspiratorial whispers and anonymous underground publications.

The continuation of the human species itself obviously requires that we get to work very quickly indeed to understand as much as we can about how the human mind functions. We must use all possible tools toward that end, and we must use them with care, with love, and with respect.

## CHAPTER 23. WHO IS JOHN JONES?

(Shura's voice)

In another chapter in this volume (DMT is Everywhere), I mentioned having had the pleasure of being in Australia and enjoying the pursuit of Wattle trees, and Acacia species, and the total pleasure of exploring and discovering Sydney. But I did not talk about my reason for being there.

I was the guest of the attorney for a defendant in the Crown Court case involving some allegedly improper activity with a drug called Nexus. This had been identified as 2C-B and, as I had been the first person to have thought of it, synthesized it, and published its properties and activity, I had been invited to provide factual material to the court in its search for justice. Alice and I were given first class accommodations in a clean, stylishly furnished hotel room in downtown Sidney, in the many-star Sheridan on the Park. The entire structure of the court system there, and the roles of barristers and solicitors, was new and totally fascinating. The scheduled time for our appearance for testimony was being continuously delayed by the Crown, which gave us a fine opportunity to explore the city and become comfortable with the typical Sydneysider and his behavior.

We found, among other things, an intense relationship with the telephone, and an unexpected terminology for coffee. I have never seen so many cellular phones in my life. Walking up the street we would approach a frail grandmother who was pulling her grocery cart behind her and talking on a cellular phone. Going up to the top of the Centerpoint tower, with sixteen people on the elevator, we saw four using their cellular telephones. An unexpected cultural difference is the way they say phone numbers. If we have two of the same numbers in a row, we will say, 4-2-2-7, for example. In Sydney, it is 4-double-2-7. How about 1-1-1-3? It becomes triple-1-3. I asked my barrister ally, what if there are four? Such as 2-5-5-5-5-8? It becomes 2-double-5-double-5-8. I tried for sequences of 5 identical digits in a row but never got an answer.

Then there was the matter of coffee ordering and coffee service which deserves comment. I drink black coffee, and Alice has cream in hers. To order a black coffee in Sydney, you ask (without hand gestures, please) for a long black. A coffee with cream is a flat white. Exploring this further, we found that an espresso is a short black, and a cappuccino is, rather unimaginatively, a cappuccino. Quite unexpectedly, one does not get any benefit from the request for a "topping-off," or a little more. If you want more coffee, you get a second cup, saucer and all, for another two dollars.

Two aspects of the criminal case that brought us to Australia became important to us, one informative and the other provocative. Both dealt with *PIHKAL*, the predecessor to this book that Alice and I wrote a few years ago. The informative point was the discovery that there are censorship laws in Australia, and the provocative point was the anonymous nature of the censor.

In the United States, there is a most remarkable amendment to our Constitution that protects our right to speak and write as we wish. And, although there are continuous efforts to circumvent this protection, the courts have, to a large measure, reiterated and respected it. I used to believe, along with many of my countrymen, that such rights are shared by many of the other developed nations but, in fact, the United States is virtually unique in having this concept as an operating principle. This issue became quite apparent with our publication of *PIHKAL*, and the encountering of some difficulties in distributing it in several countries. I knew that Nicholas Saunders had had an unpleasant interaction with the Customs people in Australia over the seizure of a shipment of his popular book, *Efor Ecstasy*. He was told that it was not allowed to be imported due to its provocative nature. A court action would be required to contest the act of seizure, and the costs of the battle would far exceed the value of the books. In effect, this was an act of censorship.

I was curious about this Australia vs. England nastiness. Some years ago a book was written about the inner workings of British intelligence, MI-5 and/or MI-6, and it was not too complimentary. It was not allowed in to be sold in England, but it was published in paperback in Australia and everyone who returned home from there to England brought back 10 copies. They were theoretically banned from importation, probably through the invocation of National Security restrictions which is a common ploy used by a country that wishes to continue looking liberal to the rest of the world. But after a very large number of copies flooded back in, the authorities said to hell with it, and the importation barrier was removed. So, there is a listing of banned books in England too. Germany is not free of these restrictions either. I had an offer from a very enthusiastic bilingual German to translate *PIHKAL* into German. I queried my German publisher



friend who told me that although there would be no censorship imposed on a German edition, it would nonetheless be "indexed," and this would effectively keep it from the open market there.

I was told that, in Australia, *PIHKAL* was on some official list of banned books, but I found that a bit hard to believe as I'd had several large mail shipments go right through into the country. Many had been individual mailings, and maybe the return address that had been used was not the one that had been recorded with the authorities. I know that quite a bit of raw stuff (sex, pornography and terrorism; what else is there?) was easily available in Sydney, as I had snooped in the off-color portion of the basement of a large bookstore called Dymick's, not far from the children's section. There I had found illustrated photo-books on sexual mutilation, and a couple of handbooks designed for anarchists. Maybe it's the drug theme that is of most interest to the censors. A chemist who works for the Government (and who has appeared on numerous occasions as an expert witness in court cases) told me that when he needs to make reference to *PIHKAL* in court he has to add the qualifier that he has access to the book only by some special legal dispensation. The book, he tells the court, is not publicly available in Australia. Indeed?

During this visit I was invited to give a short lecture to the members of a forensic society made up mostly of chemists and toxicologists from Australia and New Zealand. Initially my reception was a bit cool, quite reasonably, as I had been invited by the defense and some of them would certainly be providing testimony in conflict with mine. But our interaction warmed up quickly once I started talking and, when there had developed an easy give and take, I mentioned some chemical detail out of *PIHKAL*. On impulse I asked, out of curiosity, how many of them had their own copy. Most people guardedly raised their hands. In court, Madame Crown apparently had her own copy. The defense barristers also had their own copies. The defendant had his own copy. I doubt that they all had some official dispensation. So what is the nature of this censorship? On returning from Sydney, I mailed six copies that I had promised to new acquaintances I had met while there, and all went off by airmail with my home return address on the cover, and each clearly marked as being a book. None returned.

The existence of some form of national censorship, in itself, did not surprise me too much. What I found much more provocative was my inability to find out what had been censored. I had to assume that the listing of the books denied entry is itself a confidential matter, constituting yet another example of censorship. And, more important, who is the anonymous John Jones who decides what that list should contain? What is the identity of the person who wields the power to say what can or

cannot be read? His beliefs and prejudices will achieve wide currency with the exercise of this power. Are these choices confirmed by some sort of consensus? Is there a committee? Who elected them, or are they appointed? Are there guidelines that are to be followed and, if so, who wrote them and who approved them? In the case of books, are they read before being condemned, or are there key words or ideas that are the kiss of death?

There are subtle pressures that can be brought to bear against the free expression of controversial ideas even in a Constitutionally defined and protected society such as ours here in the United States. Referring again to one of my favorite topics, the ongoing polemic concerning drug legalization, free speech may not be disallowed but it can be effectively discouraged. The main equation for those who would wish to limit the freedom of expression is based on a faulted application of the truth table structure. Those who are not against something must be in favor of it. There is a classical logic form called the dilemma: either *a* or *b*, not *a* implies *b*. This line of thought in its pure form applies to a logical and inanimate world without people or choice. If it is either red or blue and it is not red, then it has to be blue. No morality is involved, no sermon is delivered, and there is no hidden message. But this becomes quite distorted when applied to the real world. And the flaw comes in the division of the world into just red or blue when there are many other colors. Either you do love your wife, or you do not love your wife. No consideration is taken of the possibility that you are not married.

It is with this kind of reasoning that the drug law arguments are presented. Any suggestion of softening the law is seen as the advocacy of drug use. Even the statement "the need for discussion in these areas" is condemned as being, de facto, drug advocacy. The phrase, "Harm Reduction," is equated to "Legalization." All the world is either just say "no" or just say "yes," and not "no" implies "yes." This is why the politicians feel that ever louder "no's" must be enacted into law, to assure their constituency that they are not saying "yes."

One likes to think of controversy as being largely middle ground, with extreme positions representing small populations at the outer edges of the distribution. But in situations where no compromise is sought, the population is usually gathered at the two extreme positions with only a few of the middle-of-the-roaders occupying neutral ground. Two phenomena contribute to this and effectively exacerbate it. One, the more widely acknowledged, is called the hostile media effect. Even if a discussion on a controversial topic is balanced, as fairly judged by neutral evaluators, a listener from side A will tend to simply accept the presented arguments of the side he favors, but be unduly offended at the arguments favoring

side B, which he sees as wrong and unfair. A sees the media as presenting an argument to a large measure in favor of B; B sees the media as favoring side A. Both see the media as being unfair and prejudiced though it may be quite neutral.

A second phenomenon is less widely appreciated, but is just as effective in separating people ever further from considering the poorly populated middle ground. It is the polarization effect. When an effort is made by a neutral person to temper an opinion of an A-side believer, especially in a public situation, it is seen as an attack, and A's conviction can be made even more extreme. B-sides will respond similarly. This is truly an "us against them" distribution and, without some overriding acknowledgment of a need for compromise, none can ever be found.

A sizable amount of public funds is used to emphasize this dichotomy in respect to the war on drugs. There are anti-drug programs bringing police into our schools to instruct our children in the badness of drug use, and it is called education; they have their staunch advocates and their equally vigorous opponents. There are many research grants awarded from our health service institutions to search out explanations of neural damage and addiction associated with illegal drugs. This of course reinforces the public opinion that there are only negative consequences stemming from drug use. Pamphlets are available from the DEA giving public speakers clues on holding their own in public debates with people advocating drug legalization. One of the precipitating factors in the firing of Jocelyn Elders from the position of Surgeon General was her remark that we should discuss the question of drug legalization. Even though she said discuss, not promote, her comments were held as "sending the message" that drug use was OK, and she eventually had to resign her position. There is the pervasive use of the pejorative word "abuse" in association with drug use, when the drug in question is one that the speaker does not approve of.

There are effective ways of constraining and limiting one's freedom of speech which lie completely outside the protection of the Bill of Rights amendments to the Constitution. If you express opinions that are not liked by your employer or, say, the Dean of your University, you may be called up to a critical panel to provide an apology or a recantation, with the threat of public condemnation or job loss if you don't. This process was honed to a fine art a few centuries ago and is known as an inquisition. Not judgment by legal powers, but judgment by societal powers. This can serve as an effective deterrent to the expression of your opinion.

But back to Australia, and the matter of John Jones' identity. How can you get answers to such questions? The first of my usual approaches in this kind of exploration is through the briar patch of administrative obfuscation. Ask someone in a governmental position just who it is you

should ask. Ask in several places to start with. Maybe the National Committee on Arts and Letters, or the Customs Service Office in Canberra, or the librarian at the Sydney Police Centre. Try all three. Ask each one for the correct place to write for this information. If you follow such a plan for a few steps, using the previous person contacted as an introduction to the new one, sometimes you get somewhere. My second approach is more indirect and usually more successful. Ask writers, and radio and TV news people, and newspaper investigative reporters. Again, let each lead you to another, and the chain of introductions will in time get you your answer. And with either approach, if the answer is that the answer is not known or not to be told, your search has then revealed the threads of a police state in the making, and this is even a more valuable bit of information concerning a culture. A man of John Jones' degree of empowerment deserves to be publicly known and publicly acknowledged, and to share with everyone his philosophy and the tenets of his operating agenda. He is certainly influencing his own nation and, indirectly, all other nations which have diplomatic interactions with it.

I will try each of these processes for information gathering. I would love to be able to say who John Jones really is, his source of authority, and his personal philosophy. I intend to do my best to find out.

## CHAPTER 24. CUI BONO?

(Shura's voice)

When an official investigation is conducted to address a criminal event, an arson fire, a bomb explosion, a homicide, any crime for which there is no apparent suspect, the attention of law enforcement is always first focused on who might have been rewarded by the crime. I'd had this concept in my mind as "Qui Bono," or, "who benefits?" I searched in all the thesauri and classical quotations for the phrase, to no avail. Then a linguistic scholar friend of mine paraphrased the 1992 Clinton political catch-phrase involving the economy, by telling me, "It's the dative, stupid." And indeed it turns out to be "Cui Bono," "to whose benefit?" It is instructive to apply this question to the entire "War on Drugs" scene.

Look about you and observe just which institutions are the most vocal in demanding that, rather than considering a stopping or even softening of the war, it must be continued and even exacerbated. Look at the specific way each particular institution benefits from the war. How much is it worth, and to whom, to continue the war? What would they lose if the war were to cease? And it is not just the dollars and cents to be considered but also the power and authority to control behavior that accrue to the war and its warriors. That is the heart of this chapter. In a word, what is the size of the industry that is, in fact, the "war on drugs?" How much benefit is there to be realized in maintaining and expanding this war? The picture is not particularly pretty, but it must be painted, and I will try to do so here.

The measurement of the size of a corporation can be reckoned as a dollars thing. How much income is there? How many expenses? Add up profits, sales, dividends, imports and exports. Count up the number of shares listed on the NYSE and the cost per share. Such and such corporation is worth \$40 billion according to its current financial records. This is what I call the world of the bean-counters. But that is the measure of a company, not an industry. The influence of the transportation industry is not measured by the gross income of a bunch of airlines. The power of the

communications industry is much more than the gross income of the television and radio corporations. One must measure the industry's interactions with society and its ability to affect politics. How extensive is its control of human behavior? This is the true measure of its power. And the war on drugs is indeed an industry. The size of it is a measure of the power and influence it has both on Congress and public opinion, and on its immunity from close inspection and change. Let me try to take its measure.

I saw a fascinating short clip on television some time ago. The Pentagon, rather proudly, made a public release of some film footage of periscope viewings from one of its nuclear submarines. It had been tracking a trawler presumably carrying cocaine from a South American port towards the United States. It showed an image of the trawler targeted by the cross-hairs, with a voice-over making a claim that for a mere \$23,000 an hour, the Navy can not only maintain its tracking skills but also provide valuable information in the war on drugs. The latter is achieved by alerting the Coast Guard as to where and when smuggling boats will reach American ports. This one little film clip brought two totally ugly facts into mind. One, the Navy here is being encouraged, perhaps required, to pay attention to the "war" aspect of the war on drugs. And two, this activity is being made to appear trivial by a bean-counting manipulation that considers only some of the beans, not all of the beans. How much does this military involvement contribute to the drug war industry?

I was sitting around the campfire last year with my Owl Club friends at the annual two-week get-together of my favorite conservative gentlemen's club group. During a lull in conversation I asked them what they thought the cost was of operating a nuclear submarine, on full duty, for one hour? Oh, wow; this got a heated discussion started. The sales tag of \$23,000 was less than the lowest estimate, and was dismissed as only the cost of potato chips and toilet paper, and maybe salaries for the crew for that 60 minute period along with a pro-rata share of the necessary land-based controlling operation structure. That would be the money out of pocket for that hour. Perhaps this estimate was from a commissary analyst, thinking in terms of hour by hour, with accounting claims made by the first of next month. The two engineers who were there saw the costs in a very different light, considering the essential returns to port at frequent intervals to repair, replace, and renew. New rods must go into the reactor pile, and new tritium must be supplied to the nuclear warheads. This takes expensive manpower and expensive materials. Millions of dollars of nuclear stuff. And this must be pro-rated over that entire cruise at sea while you were looking at cocaine boats. Many millions of dollars a year for maintenance adds much to that hourly potato chip rate.

Then the one physicist who was in the circle said, "Hold it. You are out of your skulls. How much money did it take to create that initial

breeding pile of isotopically enriched uranium? Where was this done, and with what, made where? How were the fuel rods moved to the site where the submarine was being made? How often were they replaced? And, again, by whom and with what, made where? Where were the spent rods taken? How will they be disposed of? And, in a few years, how will we successfully hide, forever, the spent carcass of this fiercely radioactive submarine, so that it will not be a lingering poison for decades on our children's doorsteps? We are into many, many more millions of dollars of unacknowledged obligations, all of which must be pro-rated into the hourly costs of that cocaine snooper." His guess was the cost of that sub might be a million bucks an hour. Then one additional comment made shambles of the entire discussion. "How much is it worth to us, to be protected from being destroyed by someone like the Soviet Union? Without this weapon being available and at the ready, we are of an increased vulnerability to any enemy. Even if it is not being used, just having that machine is most valuable in the front line as protection against any unknown threat to our nation. That transfers some of your war on drugs dollars over to National Defense."

Unknown billions of dollars, divided into a few decades of operation, put a monster cost on the operation of a submerged surveillance submarine. There is no accurate way to come to a final dollar total on this, or most of the other matters discussed in this chapter, so I won't try. It is easy to lose sight of the dollar cost of a detail, in an effort to measure the dollar size of an industry. Forgive me if I say stuff like "a few billions," or "lots of billions." It is clear that no exact costs can be gotten here, and that same uncertainty will apply to all efforts to measure the size of this particular "war" industry. The war is being waged by a large number of unrelated interests, by millions of people, and it is being fought largely within the United States. It is the first full-scale instance of American citizens fighting American citizens in a battle fought on domestic soil in over a century. The last conflict of this size was the 1861 Civil War, or the War between the States, which consumed our energies and wealth, and destroyed so many of our youth in that four year period. But our present war has been underway now for well over a decade, and there is no victory in sight. The intensity and costs have been continuously increasing, and the suffering and damage from it is without precedent.

#### The Military Component:

The submarine example makes the discussion of the military a logical starting point. After the Civil War (the first Civil War, not this war on drugs), there was passed by Congress in 1878, and signed by President Rutherford Hayes, a law called the Posse Comitatus Act. This was a

reconstruction measure designed to stay the hand of the Northern troops in seeking either revenge or influence in the restructuring of the Southern states. This law prohibited, and still prohibits, any military involvement in police action or law enforcement with the civilian population. Exception is allowed only if a National Emergency is declared to address a crisis that demands control of civilians.

I know of one try by Congress to write such a statement into proposed drug control legislation, but it was softened with some appended conditional words which would have provided a compromised and partial measure. At present, there is no such declared emergency and, by Federal law, the military cannot be legally involved.

A very large percentage of our annual budget of over a thousand billion dollars goes to the military. We must have enemies, and we must be prepared to fight them on demand. With the loss of the Soviet Union as a major foe, and with the subtle shift from big national antagonists to the more elusive and ephemeral uglies such as terrorists and rogue dictators, there was nothing large and obvious to justify hundreds of billions of dollars annually for Star Wars and stealth bombers. A new enemy was needed, and drugs fit the bill perfectly. The submarine example earlier is trivial. Ask, rather, how much of our influence and effectiveness in South and Central America, and in Asia, is directly correlated to our policies on illegal drugs such as cocaine and heroin? What is the level of military cooperation, or effective economic stability, that comes from our government's acceptance of the Mexican army's role as one of the major producers and distributors of marijuana in the Western Hemisphere? There are many suggestions of alliances between agencies such as the CIA and cocaine transport. Look at our relationships with Central America, and with Asia in the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle. If only a few of the many rumored military, political, and intelligence conspiracies were valid, we (America) would have a multi-billion dollar contribution to the war on drugs industry.

But just such involvement is today a *de facto* reality, as both the Coast Guard and the National Guard have been brought in to help police our borders. Originally their participation was justified by the understaffing of the customs and immigration services, but in recent years the role that drugs play in defining their participation has become quite blatant. Their usual duties (safety violations, current registration, identification papers) have become thinly-disguised excuses for drug searching. Recent seizures of boats or vehicles under authority of the rules of civil forfeiture regulations clearly define the civil law aspect of their actions. The only way such action could have been rationalized under the *Posse Comitatus* Act would have been to declare these groups not to be part of the U.S. Military. Instead, their participation was never challenged. This tacit



approval met the legal needs for a while and, although they call for tactical support from the Army or Navy (helicopters, airplanes), they were officially not to be considered a part of the Pentagon empire. But that sham is pretty well exposed with the submarine tracking incident I mentioned above. The military continues to consume an outrageous percentage of our national wealth. In 1990, the following of cocaine trawlers would have been a throw-away hiccup on the edge of the tracking field of a high resolution spy satellite. Our casual justification of an immense military budget used to depend upon our unquestioning acceptance of the Soviet threat to national security. But with the Soviet threat now being history, we have had to find other threats to our nation in order to continue to maintain our declared objective of being capable of fighting two wars simultaneously. Thus, this domestic war, our war on drugs, has become an economic life-saver for the military budget.

Does the Navy use taxpayers' funds for other submarines to follow traffic in and out of other ports, foreign or domestic, that might be involved in drug transactions? What about the Army (or the Navy or the Air Force?) as the source of the planes and pilots for drug-related operations in the interior of Colombia (or Bolivia, or Burma, or any other country the United States may wish to exert influence over) using the enforcement of drug laws (theirs or ours) as a rationalization? What about within the United States itself? Who runs, or at least provides, the machinery for the observation and documentation of illegal crops, especially marijuana growing? How can one begin to estimate the financial bookkeeping entries for items that have, until very recently, never even been acknowledged?

#### The Political Component:

Similar difficulties arise in trying to determine the profit the war on drugs provides to the State Department and its strategists, because the drug trade is an international phenomenon. This trade, and the laws against it, allows an easy entry into foreign, clandestine operations, and an ever greater influence in shaping other governments' policies. Always remember that, to a major extent, the enactment of the domestic drug laws of many of the countries around the world has been at the encouragement, or insistence, of the United States. The Single Narcotics Convention Treaty was crafted and written within the United States and, as it has been signed by many of the members of the United Nations, it has effectively provided a structure that has directed the writing of their laws.

What is this sort of influence, this entry into the politics of other countries, worth? Perhaps an idea might come from guessing how much would be lost if drug laws were repealed, and this entry denied to our Government.

"War on drugs" is a misleading name for this conflict. That kind of title brings to mind an image of a platoon of infantrymen all lined up with loaded rifles, firing round after round of bullets into stacks of gelatin capsules and glass ampules. It is certainly obvious that the drugs are not protecting themselves by firing back or running away, so drugs as such cannot be the enemy. Drugs are not good or bad. There is nothing that is intrinsically either sacred or evil in a crystal of white solid or a drop of aqueous solution. As you read the continuous news reports from the battlefields you will realize that our nation is not making war against drugs as such but, rather, against the people who use drugs. It perhaps should be called a "war on drug users," and not all drug users but, specifically, those people who use drugs that our legislative spokesmen disapprove of. This disapproval stems, in turn, from their belief that these opinions are shared by those who might elect them back into office.

However, when you look between the lines of these reports from the front, a much more complex picture becomes apparent. There really is no war at all, neither against drugs (of course), but for all intents and purposes not even against the many, many people who use them. There are no legions with cohorts gleaming in purple and gold and there are no bullets or bombs of righteousness. There are no "God is on our side, not on yours" pronouncements. Oh yes, there are skirmishes, nasty interactions between the authorities and the little people, between the police (Federal, State and local) and the largely defenseless minorities, be they dealers in dope or simply part of an unenfranchised population. Certainly, the drug motif is frequently used to justify the profound changes that are taking place in our society, but these us-versus-them interactions are side-shows to the actual process that is currently underway. The phenomenon is much more sinister and far-reaching than would be inferred from the newspaper headlines, which mention only the ephemeral, drug-related events. A local arrest here and a related raid there are the reminders to the public that the evils of drug use are all about us, and that we need ever stronger measures to be taken in the name of this war.

But these increasingly strong measures constitute the heart of the true threat, and it can only be through the analysis of them, and of their reasons for being and the reasons for their continuation and amplification, that the size and the end-goal of this threat can be determined. What are the changes that are being made under the guise of the war on drugs? What are the real reasons for their being instituted? And of especially revealing importance, who gains power or wealth from these changes? To whose benefit? Cui bono?

My thesis is this: The war on drugs has little to do with drugs and drug users. It exists and is promoted largely as a means to accumulate

power in the form of money and in the gaining of control over individual citizens. This centralization of power will be at the cost of personal freedoms, and represents a dire threat to the nature of our republic. The process is well underway, and it has progressed much further than most people realize. To stop it now would prove to be very difficult. The end state will be a complacent and obedient society (the terms "Police State" and "Totalitarianism" are too loaded to use casually but they are completely applicable) with no effective Constitutional rights and with a Congress which has an ineffective voice. The war on drugs is a cover for these transformations. I want to explore the nature of the beast.

I believe the most direct way to effect such an exploration is to look at this war as an industry, and to analyze it as such. How large is it? How effectively diversified is it? How much public support does it currently have, and how is this being increased? How much wealth have the several individuals and corporations that make up this industry already accumulated, and how is this power being invested in the continuation of this transformation? The war-on-drugs industry is more than a drug bust and a police raid. Let me try to unravel this monster a piece at a time, beginning with an attempt to estimate the size of this industry. Originally I had started to record big chunks of money as a measure of the size of this phenomenon, \$20 billion here and \$40 million there, and quickly realized that I was, indeed, becoming another bean counter. No. Better to ask who is involved, who reaps the rewards, who gets both power and control over others, from the operation? Let me look at the several components in a broad sense, which are only in part measurable in dollars. Let me recapitulate the argument above, along with some information that will be of value to the reader.

#### The Prison Component:

Many years ago, President Dwight Eisenhower referred to the economic structure of our country as the military/industrial complex. This enlightened term has proven to be completely appropriate — for the complex is not two separate components working separately; it is not two separate components working in sympathy; it is a single thing, a single entity, that directs the economy and thus effectively defines both the domestic as well as the international image of the United States. Recently a friend of mine paraphrased this as the industrial/military/prison complex, and I found myself making an uncomfortable connection between the recent Soviet nation and the present American one. The Stalinist prison camps, the Gulag world, the Siberian labor camps, are all well documented as having been isolated dumping areas for people who

were not part of the desired social structure. Some were real criminals with proven records of sociopathic behavior that constituted a true risk to society. But most were victims of a strategy designed to achieve a political goal by the designation of carefully chosen social patterns as being criminal activity. The crimes were speaking badly of the state, or choosing not to work at meaningful jobs, or being homosexual, or acting in some way that could be interpreted as being anti-establishment. The vast majority of the criminal class, defined as being in prison for the commission of crimes against the state, were violators of laws that were political devices created solely for the cleaning up of unwanted minorities and for the effective consolidation of power. The Soviet Union had, until recently, the largest per capita prison population of any industrial country in the world.

Look now at our own domestic situation. Change a few of the defining criteria, and you will find a remarkable parallel between the former Soviet Union and the present United States. We also have the statistically valid number of sociopaths, and we protect our society from their offenses in the generally accepted way, by protective incarceration. These are the killers, the molesters, the rapists and thieves deemed worthy of removal from our society. But how have we rationalized the removal of the masses of people who are not a functional part of our society, who might be misfits or present difficulties to the consolidation and centralization of power? For us these are not the Trotskyites and antisocial revolutionaries; they are the racial minorities, the urban gangs and "welfare parasites." We cannot use the excuse of lawlessness and anarchy as the rationalization for prosecution and imprisonment. What we can do is take advantage of the fact that there has always been, and there will always be, a small but real percentage of our population that finds some reward from the use of drugs. Then we can shine an ever-more intense spotlight on this behavior through the escalation of laws and penalties, the promotion of a civilian propaganda campaign generating social disapproval, with everything done, of course, in the name of purifying the culture and ridding our society of a vicious, destructive plague. Our progress can be documented by the fact that over half — *over half!* — of our prison population consists of people who violated our drug laws, or committed crimes that existed only by virtue of our drug laws. We now have the world's largest per capita prison population, and Russia is no longer in the running.

Estimating the costs of prisons is somewhat straightforward, in that contracts are signed and structures are built. Each person who is in prison requires a cell, guards, medical attention and food, and is estimated to cost our taxpayers \$30,000 a year. With a nation-wide population of over a million prisoners, over half of whom are in some way casualties of the war on drugs, a rough figure of some \$20 billion appears to be a

good guess for this component of this industry. But this is the potato chips and toilet paper cost.

There is not enough space. There is the insistent pounding of the spoon against the dish by hungry Oliver; more, more, more. The prison building contractors are active in construction with dozens of new prisons currently being built and many more in the bidding stage. Maybe a few more tens of billions of dollars? So much money has successfully gone into lobbying by the prison interests this year, in California, that the budget for prison maintenance and construction has, for the first time, exceeded the State budget for education.

But again, there are dollar estimates which are difficult to make even with prisons and law enforcement. If you put a man in prison for any reason, he may well leave behind a wife and two children who cannot support themselves. How can one even guess at the economic chaos that is a direct consequence of having the bread-winner removed from his dependent family by conviction and incarceration for a drug crime?

Also do remember the necessary machinery for the determination of guilt or innocence. What are the costs associated with the staffing and operating of all the Federal Courts, the State courts, the county and municipal courts, with judges and juries and bailiffs and janitors? A large percentage of this is directly or indirectly related to drug law violation and has to be reckoned into the calculation. And let us not forget the monstrously large legal profession. The nation has almost a million lawyers, many of whom are employed exclusively in drug law violation defenses, and most of them charge somewhere around 200 dollars per hour. Some thousands of drug lawyers, serving many thousands of clients involved in charges of drug-related behavior, comprise a multi-billion dollar component in this industry.

We cannot forget domestic law enforcement. There is an ever increasing annual budget for the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration, and each of the fifty states has its own Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement empire which is also paid from public funds. And, of course, there are thousands of municipal narcotics task forces and marijuana search teams. Adding these into our estimate, the law-enforcement branch of our argument swells this industry by many additional billions of dollars.

#### The Asset Seizure Component:

Remember a rapidly growing off-shoot from this giant, one which started small but which is compounding at a rate of over 100% per year. This is the area of criminal forfeiture and asset seizure. Just in the last year there were over \$2 billion in contested seizures and many more that were accepted as a fait accompli. This is at the Federal level.

Most of the states are also on the take, but they are without the need of accountability or auditing, so the volume can only be guessed at. Maybe add another \$10 billion to the punishment-associated "lots of billions of dollars." The following article by Joyce Rosenwald appeared in a recent issue of Media Bypass, and says it more completely than I could. It is reprinted here with permission.

### Forfeiture: The New American Evil

"Forfeiture appears to be the newest weapon in the legal arsenal of the U.S. government unleashed upon the American people. It is used in the politically correct 'war on drugs' against every segment of society. The American people have come to fear the word 'forfeiture.' Forfeiture is a creature of statute, law made by man. It was generously given to the American people by their elected public servants in the federal congress and senate. It was then codified, into state law by their duly elected public servants who were placed in office to protect the inalienable rights of the people from harm.

"The forfeiture provision of the U.S. drug law allows the government to seize property when it is believed to have been used, or intended to be used, in a drug offense. Every type of property, real or personal, tangible or intangible may be subject to confiscation under forfeiture law. Motor vehicles, boats, and homes are the most common items subject to seizure of the tangible items. But, the most important and least publicized are the intangibles. These are your basic rights, privileges, interests, claims and securities. The money from illegal drug transactions and all property believed to have been bought with that money, are also subject to confiscation.

"The government doesn't have to actually find any drugs. Forfeiture can occur if the government believes the owner merely intended to use the property to commit a crime involving drugs. Some time after the government has taken everything you own, they will bring a forfeiture lawsuit to permanently deprive the owner of his or her property. In some cases, criminal or civil charges are never brought against an individual.

"The basic belief of all Americans in questions of law has always been that you are innocent until proven guilty. Forfeiture law inverts this principle. Americans have also believed that in civil law, there must be a victim who will come forward and bring charges against you. Forfeiture law also changed that belief. Today government is the victim, which is a new principle of American law. Today you are guilty, with perhaps no opportunity to prove your innocence, and without any assets to pay for your defense.

"Actually, forfeiture is a relic of the medieval law of 'deodand'. Law of deodand evolved from the legal superstition that an inanimate object can itself be guilty of wrongdoing. So, if a man fell from a tree and died, the tree was chopped down as a deodand. The tree was believed to be guilty of murder. In early English common law, an animal, or any weapon or other object that caused the death of a human being was confiscated as a deodand, and then sold with the proceeds going to the family of the deceased. The same principle applied today would be if a death resulted from an automobile accident. The automobile would be confiscated and sold as a deodand with the proceeds going to the family of the deceased. The automobile would be considered the offender, not the driver. The automobile would be forfeited, i.e. the deodand.

"Today, when government claims to be the victim in a civil or criminal crime, under forfeiture (deodand) law, it receives the proceeds from the sale of the offending property.

"Although deodand forfeitures were common in the early American colonies, they appear to have been abolished by the time of the American Revolution or shortly thereafter. In colonial America, common law forfeiture was rare. During the Revolution, some of the states enacted provisions forfeiting the land and goods of those sympathetic to the Crown. After the Revolution the Constitution restricted the use of forfeiture unless congress passed a statute (law) allowing for its special use.

"Today 'Civil' forfeiture is termed as an 'in rem' proceeding. This means your property, as in English deodand, is the

defendant and the burden of proof rests on the party claiming ownership. The innocence of the owner is of no importance. All that is necessary for prosecution is that the property was involved in a violation to which forfeiture is the penalty. 'Criminal' forfeiture on the other hand today, is an in personam proceeding, and confiscation is only possible upon the conviction of the owner or user of the property.

"Most state and federal forfeiture statutes (laws) call for civil forfeiture, which as proceedings in rem (property) allows the court to take your property as the first step in confiscation proceedings. The United States Constitution prohibits confiscation of property without 'DUE PROCESS.' Under forfeiture law, due process requires that those with an interest in the property be given reasonable notice and opportunity for a hearing on the property seizure.

"This does not mean that pre-seizure notice and hearing is required. Pre-seizure notice before confiscation of property does not always take place. Although confiscation of property without 'Due Process' blatantly violates the United States Constitution and the Constitutions of most of the United States, court challenges have been mostly unsuccessful.

"Once property has been forfeited to the sovereign, (U.S. government) the statutes (laws written by congress) may authorize use of the property by the seizing agency, (Department of Justice). Distribution of the proceeds from the sale of the property may then go to the seizing agency, (local law enforcement or Justice Department, to informers, or to the sovereign's general fund, the U.S Treasury Department) who will then have the funds to hire more government agents to make it easier to start forfeiture proceeding against your neighbors or you.

"The newly passed crime bill creates hundreds of new crimes, many falling under penalty of forfeiture. The bill also allows for the hiring of 10,000 new police officers. It would appear that along with 'the war on drugs' and 'the war on crime' your government has just declared 'War On Property Ownership in America'."



Please do remember the following two quotations: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated ... " U.S. Constitution, Amendment IV; "... nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law ..." U.S. Constitution, Amendment V.

#### The Industrial Component:

The industrial and corporate division of this extraordinary war on drugs touches, in one way or another, the entire civilian population.

One of the most pernicious and unjustified insults to the average person has been the increasingly wide-spread demand for urine tests for evidence of guilt or innocence as to the use of drugs. The concept probably had its origins with the use of alcohol in connection with driving. If a person is, through some erratic behavior, thought to be driving after having been drinking, he could be asked to provide a body fluid sample, blood or urine. Blood was preferred, as it is quickly drawn, and the state of being "under the influence" is defined by blood levels. With urine, on the other hand, a twenty minute waiting period is required following the emptying of the bladder, to assure a sample that most closely reflects the blood level. But the information was supplementary to a "field sobriety test" which carried much weight. All of this, following an observation that justified a "for cause" argument.

The "on demand" without "due cause" urine test has quietly grown to monster proportions over the last decade. Initially it was a search of a person involved in some accident, some unexpected event, for evidence that his actions might be explained by drug use. Then it became extended to a precautionary move to assure an increasingly propagandized public that those in positions of public service (pilots, train engineers, bus drivers) would not put us at risk.

This was then promoted into the concept of a "drug-free workplace" through a dishonest interpretation of the findings of a well-known research institute on the East Coast. The negative correlation part of this report, that implied a decrease of work performance with the use of certain drugs, was amplified to apply to all drugs, then expressed in dollars, adjusted for inflation, and extrapolated to the total employed population of the country. The summed total, \$60 billion dollars, was pronounced as the annual loss to our productivity due to drugs. From this evolved an unprecedented, but now widely accepted, procedure used by many companies. You must provide a urine sample when you are applying for employment, and you must agree to a random test at any time, if you are hired. And with many of these employers, if you fail your test or refuse to take a test, you can be fired.

But, sadly, the quality of these urine tests can be very low. The presumptive test is an inexpensive screen, sometimes an antigen/antibody assay, or perhaps a thin layer chromatography procedure. The purpose of a screen is, primarily, to spend a few dollars to determine if an excellent but much more expensive assay known as gas chromatography mass spectroscopy would be justified. Spend ten bucks to save a couple of hundred bucks. These screening tests have frequent false positives, meaning that a signal is obtained that implies drug use when in fact there has been no drug exposure at all. There can be many reasons. These can include unusual dietary factors, erroneous responses due to prescription drugs, misreading or misrecording of the measuring instrument, or simply a mix-up of sample identities or laboratory cross-contamination. The only believable value that these presumptive tests have is to exonerate the subject from the need of any further testing. However, in the interests of economy or due to indifference, some employers act directly on the results of this initial screen. With a false positive rate of maybe 3% (quite a conservative number) about one in thirty employees will be labelled as being a drug user, even though he is completely innocent of such behavior.

These drug-testing procedures used to be the exclusive province of the forensic chemists, who assay seized evidence for testimony in criminal law cases. The Federal government has a few labs across the country, the States have one or several, and there are many in the more populated counties or cities. But in the last few years, an entire industry of analytical services has materialized, involving screening for drugs, or confirming the presence of drugs in urine, blood, sweat or hair. As many of these require a \$50,000 GCMS, this is a bonanza for the scientific equipment manufacturer, and represents a rapidly growing investment in the war on drugs.

President Clinton had proposed, as a re-election ploy, the urine testing of all teen-age applicants for driver's licenses. But apparently no one had thought this through to its end point. How many of our youth have their 16th birthday in a given year? Five million? Even if every one were absolutely drug free, at \$10 a pop and with a 3% false positive rate there would be 150,000 false positive results, 150,000 of our innocent youth immediately branded with a narcotics record, at the cost of \$50 million dollars. And this error would cost all of these young people access to a driver's license. Many lives ruined, future careers jeopardized, without a single drug user being validly identified. Much would be lost, and absolutely nothing gained. Of course, confirmatory tests by GCMS will catch some of these mistakes, with the annual expenditure of about twice this amount of money. That was a very destructive proposal, but it is still alive and being actively demanded by the drug warriors. Sadly, the ancient aspect of the British law that extended an individual the presumption of

innocence is neither in our Constitution nor in our legal statutes. There is only the 5th Amendment to the Constitution that protects our citizens from being required to testify against themselves. Random urine tests, or blanket urine tests, performed in the absence of cause, are simply not acceptable in our republic.

As an added thought in passing, how does one measure the loss of self-esteem, or self-respect, of a person who has just been handed a Dixie cup by his boss and told to go over there and pee into it, and in front of a witness yet? No urine? No job. It is not your skill or performance that keeps you employed — it is the degree to which you hew to the dictated morality and behavior patterns suggested by your superiors. They may not have to share this indignity, but you do. You are not trusted. In their eyes you are a second-class citizen.

Another component of the war on drugs industry represents a very large and totally unguessable amount of money. What is the loss of taxes that could accrue to the public's benefit, from this vast volume of sales of illegal drugs? At the present time there is no revenue at all. Were they in the legitimate market, there could be some measure of regulation and control and, as with alcohol and tobacco, some equation could be found for a tax that would produce a reasonable return and which would still keep the black market at a modest level. A regulated market in marijuana alone might be a multimillion dollar source of tax money with little increase in the volume of use over the present illicit level.

### The Academic Component:

The two levels of our academic institutions are both severely impacted by the war on drugs and, in their very different ways, they both contribute hugely to the size of this industry and to the welfare of those who are benefiting from it. There is the K to 12 school student population, and there is the world of higher education.

The teen age and pre-teen age crowd is being hard hit by a propaganda campaign that can be summed up in a cute phrase, "Just say no." There are television ads of the Partnership for a Drug Free America, the PDFA, which is a source of a dedicated effort to demonize all illicit drug use. For them, drug free means illegal drug free, and there should be no surprise in learning that most of the economic support comes from the major legal drug providers, the alcohol and tobacco industries. These are the groups whose monopolies of legal drug sales would be the most eroded if any of the currently illegal drugs were to be made legally available.

There is also a second assault on our young school children by an equally ineffective, but much more insidious, program called D.A.R.E.

(Drug Abuse Resistance Education). This is a government funded project that brings policemen into our schools as instructors sharing factual information concerning the use of drugs. The meta-message is that the popular illicit drugs are bad and law enforcement, in its curtailment of all illicit drug use, is a positive factor in the promotion of social values. A small but real percentage of the youngsters are coerced into sharing information about their parents' private drug lives, and family tragedies have resulted from subsequent police action.

I have a good friend who went to a DARE meeting as a surrogate for his buddy whose son was in the class. He told me with much humor of his interactions with the instructor. He said to the officer, "I am a pharmacologist. How would you accept me at the police academy if I came as a teacher to your classes on arresting procedures and the processing of prisoners?" He told me that the policeman admitted he would probably dismiss him as being unqualified. He asked, "Then how are you, as a policeman, qualified to be a teacher of pharmacology?" He did not receive an answer.

The world of higher education contributes to this war on drugs in quite a different way. Much of the research work in the Universities is funded by grants from the Government. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) through the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) and several related agencies, is one of the major sources of support for graduate and postdoctoral research grants. In addition there are a number of so-called center grants maintained at the major Universities, to set up and maintain medical and pharmacological research. There is always a keen competition for this support money, and the proposed topics are chosen and crafted with care. The structure of a grant application revolves about a research question which will be looked at favorably by the grant reviewers. Often, abuse drugs, or illegal drugs, are the subject of the application and, not unexpectedly, the questions asked suggest that the answers which might be found could be useful in advancing the anti-drug stance. Note the fine distinction between, "Is MDMA neurotoxic in the salamander?" and "What are the neurotoxic changes produced by MDMA in the salamander?"

This is only a small contributor to the difficult task of evaluating the size of this part of the war on drugs industry. There are public health problems associated with the war on drugs that extend far beyond medical research in academic areas. The spread of AIDS through needle sharing; the need for medical intervention in the many cases of drug dependency and addiction; the shocking disregard of the families left behind when the breadwinner is thrust into prison for some trivial drug crime. There is a generalized condemnation of all aspects of drug use even when factual information is available. There is no permission given for research to be

done that might weigh the virtues against the risks of drug use. There are few acknowledged virtues. Most questions along these lines are unanswered because they are not allowed to be asked. Listen to the voices which say, "We cannot allow any legal use of some given drug until more research has been done," and then say, "It is not in the public interest to allow such research." Or, "We cannot use a given drug medically until it has been proven safe," and then admit that there can be no body of evidence of any size that could ever completely prove safety.

But back to the title of the chapter. To whose benefit does all of this inhumane, irrational attitude accrue? Is there a person or a system that will be the eventual benefactor? Cui bono? There is a lot of power being amassed very rapidly in this war on drugs, and the industry that is associated with it is growing daily.

I am convinced that there will be an eventual polarization of this rush to a police state, but I have no insight as to what form it will take.

Perhaps there is a cabal of unknown people — a behind the scenes council — of a dozen or so super-egos, who will exploit some minor tragedy within this highly charged drug hysteria with a move to force the President to declare a national emergency, effectively suspending the remaining fragments of the Constitution. This would automatically institute a state of martial law, and that would allow the inclusion of the military forces in the corralling and sequestering of any particular segments of the civilian population.

Perhaps some charismatic military person might emerge from behind the wizard's curtain and win national approval in demanding, and obtaining, a referendum to take whatever steps might be called for, to return our society to the stable and secure condition that is our national self-image.

Perhaps a persuasive advisor could convince a suggestible president that he and he alone has the divine empowerment to save the country, and have him set into action the several executive orders that are sitting at the ready on his desk, to precipitate this nation into a dictatorship, in order to save it from some more heinous fate.

If any of these irreversible events occur, it will be too late to alter our course and the fate of this nation will be sealed in concrete. The changes that are needed to avert these possibilities must be made now. With every month that passes, the task will be harder. It is becoming increasingly unpopular to suggest changes, and increasingly difficult to find a way of making them. In a few years the goal will be lost from view and the task will be impossible. We will be the Fourth Reich, and we will admire and celebrate our own Hitler. We will have ceased to be a republic.

Perhaps it is already too late to end this pernicious war on drugs, but maybe a pause could be effected. I would like to quote yet another bit

of writing, this from a group that calls itself "Family Council on Drug Awareness." At a recent "State of the World Forum" in San Francisco, I received a leaflet handout with a beautifully phrased appeal for rationality and sanity in this increasingly mad race to national disaster. I feel it makes an appropriate closure to this chapter.

### **A CALL FOR A DRUG WAR TRUCE WITH PEACE NEGOTIATIONS**

**Preamble:** No civilized nation makes war on its own citizens. We, the people, did not declare war on our government nor do we wish to fight its Drug War. Hence, we now petition for redress of grievances, as follows:

**Whereas** any just government derives its authority from a respect of the People's rights and powers; and

**Whereas** the government has resorted to unilateral military force in the Drug War without any good faith effort to negotiate a peace settlement;

**Therefore,** we hereby call for a Drug War Truce during which to engage our communities and governments in peace negotiations, under the following terms:

**Article 1:** The United States shall withdraw from, repudiate, or amend any and all international Treaties or agreements limiting its ability to alter domestic drug policy.

**Article 2:** No patient shall be prosecuted nor any health care professional penalized for possession or use of any mutually agreed upon medications.

**Article 3:** Drug policy shall henceforth protect all fundamental rights, as described below:

1. Each person retains all his inalienable Constitutional, and Human Rights, without exception. No drug regulation shall violate these rights.

2. The benefit of the doubt shall always be given to the accused and to any property or assets at risk. Courts shall allow the accused to present directly to the jury any defense based on these Rights, and explanation of motive,

or any mitigating circumstances, such as religion, culture, or necessity.

3. No victim: no crime. The burden of proof and corroboration in all proceedings shall lie with the government. No secret witness nor paid testimony shall be permitted in court, including that of any government agent or informant who stands to materially gain through the disposition of a drug case or forfeited property. No civil asset forfeiture shall be levied against a family home or legitimate means of commercial livelihood.

4. Issues of entrapment, government motive, and official misconduct shall all be heard by the jury in any drug case, civil or criminal. Government agents who violate the law are fully accountable and shall be prosecuted accordingly.

5. Mandatory minimum sentences undermine our system of justice. The jury shall be informed of all penalties attached to any offense before deliberating a verdict. Courts shall have the discretion to reduce penalties in the interest of justice.

**Article 4:** We propose a Drug War Truce and call for the immediate release of all non-violent and, aside from drug charges involving adults only, law-abiding citizens.

**Article 5:** No non-violent drug charges involving adults only shall be enforced or prosecuted until all parties have agreed to, and implemented, a drug policy based on full respect for fundamental Rights and personal responsibility.

Of course, all this is simply making a restatement of the rights that have been our heritage from the Magna Carta, British common law, and our own Constitution. This truce sounds like a fine idea to me. There is a lot to gain, and nothing to lose.

Please listen.

# Epilogue



## CHAPTER 25. GALILEO

(Shura's voice)

There are interesting parallels to be drawn between the Holy Writ of 350 years ago, and that of the present day.

## THEN

The earth is the center of the universe, and anyone who says otherwise is a heretic

## NOW

All drugs that can expand consciousness are without medical or social justification, and anyone who uses them is a criminal

and shall be imprisoned.

I was sitting in the Owl Club orchestra pit at my music stand during an especially long pause in the dress rehearsal for the musical "Galileo," when this fascinating train of thought came to mind. The stage scene was an interaction between the young Galileo and the cardinals of the Inquisition. The question put to him was quite simple: "Are you engaging in heretical teachings along the lines of Copernicus, in contradiction to the facts known and taught by the Catholic church?" He had made a promise that he would not act in violation of the faith.

The authorities said:

We do not need to actually look through that mysterious contraption

There is no need to actually taste those mysterious compounds

of yours to see what is fact and what is fiction. We know what is real and we know what *is* not real. It is written in all the texts and no recourse to

such artificial means is needed. To entertain such notions is contrary to nature and is to manifest the work of the devil.

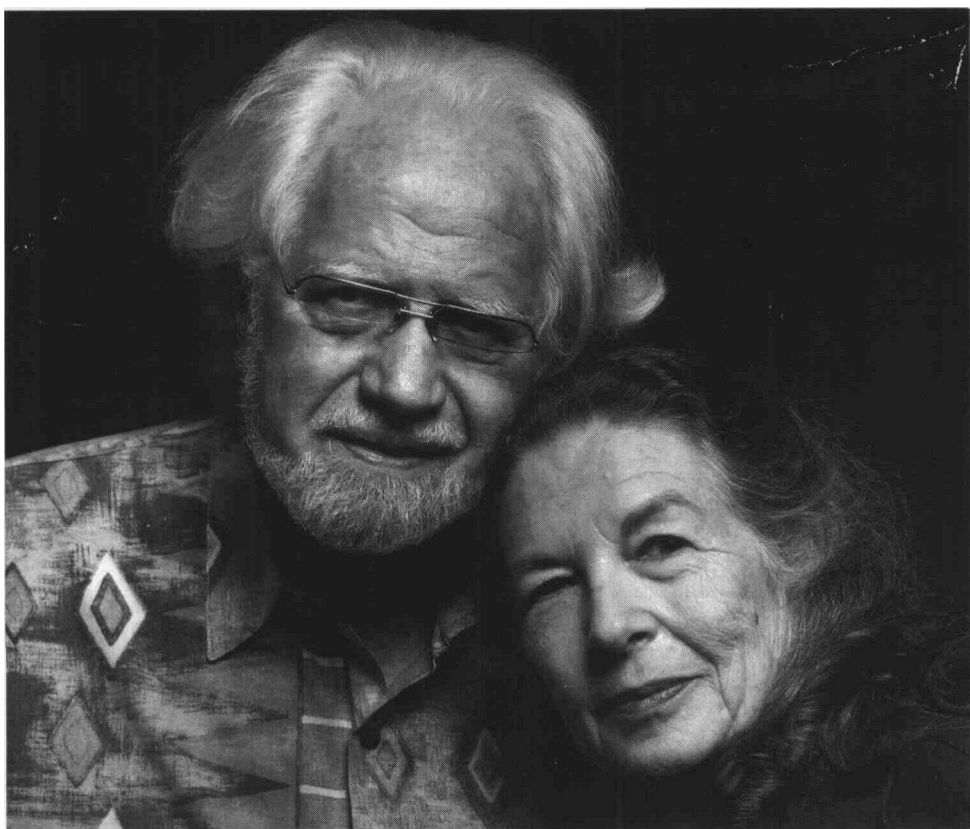
How dare you claim that the earth  
is not the center of the universe?  
Your looking glass, your moons  
around Jupiter, and your navigation  
tables prove nothing. Your heresy  
is an affront to the church, and to  
God who made the earth the center  
of the universe and gave us the  
sun as our clock.

How dare you claim that an  
understanding of God is to  
be found in a white powder?  
This talk of communication  
with the inner self, the finding  
of one's way into the hidden  
reaches of the unconscious, is  
New Age nonsense and simply  
an excuse to use dangerous drugs.

It has been almost four centuries

It has been many decades

since the original pronouncement had been made that the reality as seen through these evil instruments had no merit. The authority as invested in the church (then) has admitted that it had been wrong. The authority as invested in the government (now) has not yet made this statement. In time, it will.



*Photograph by Jack Coddington*

"Most readers of this book will likely belong to that unusual set ... who need no convincing of the value of psychedelic drugs. There will be others - not in the choir, not even in the congregation of true believers — who will greet this book's birthing with bafflement, shock, or even anger.'

Daniel M. Perrine, Loyola College, Baltimore

"This book not only reveals how psychoactives can be synthesized, but also how they can be extracted from so many ordinary plants that the means for psychedelic exploration can never be controlled again. The genie is out of the bottle and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot put it back again."

Nicholas Saunders, 14 Neal's Yard, London

TRANSFORM PRESS  
Post Office Box 13675  
Berkeley, California 94712

ISBN 0-9630096-9-9



9 780963 009692

5 2 4 5 0 >



*Edited by Dan Joy  
Cover art by  
Pam Engebretson  
Project Coordinator:  
Wendy Perry*

ISBN 0-9630096-9-9

\$24.50